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AND

ELDER



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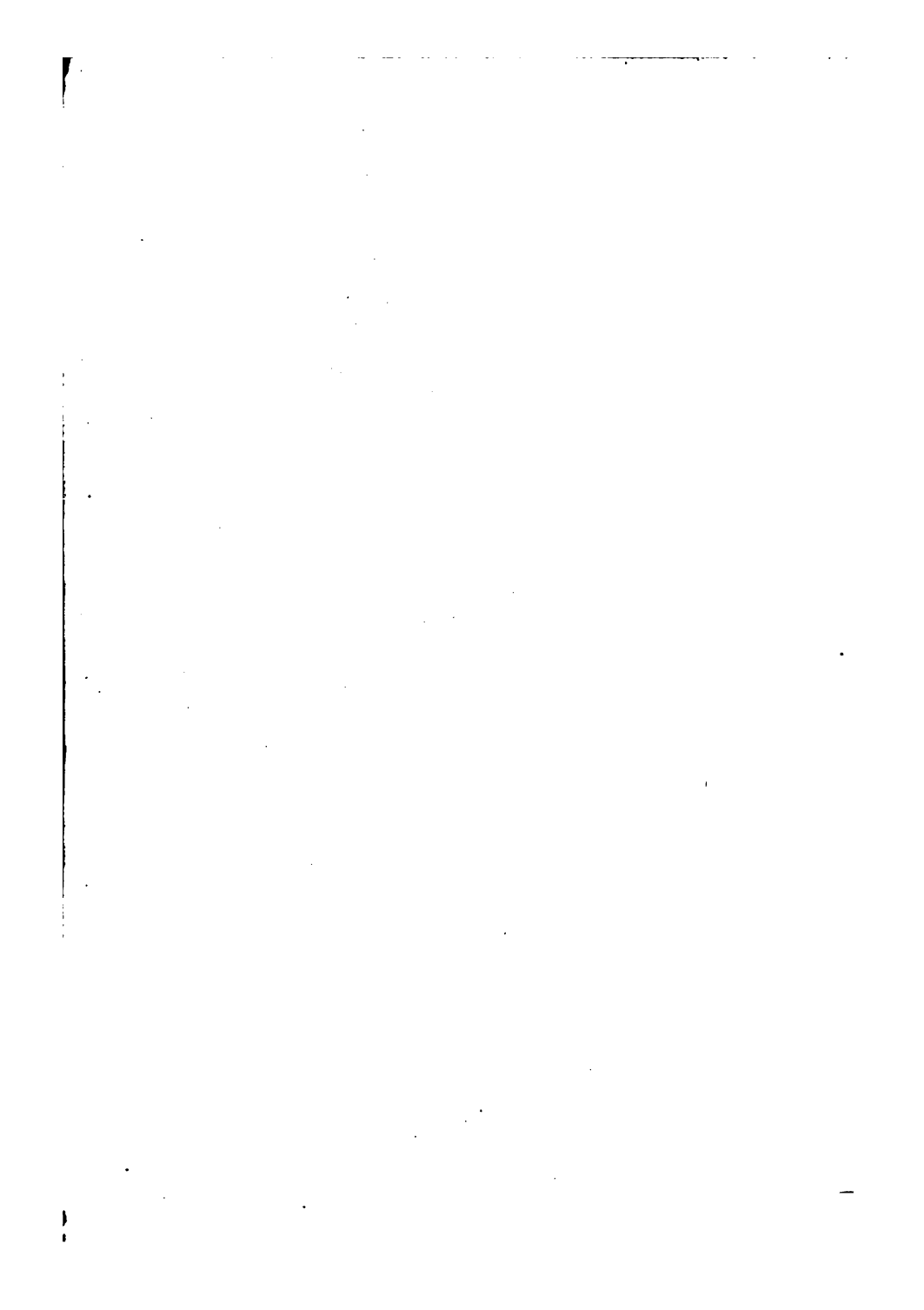
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JAMES INWICK

PLOUGHMAN AND ELDER

BY
P. HAY HUNTER
Toe

WITH A GLOSSARY



NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS
PUBLISHERS

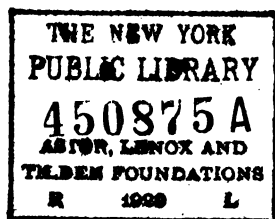
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TO

R. J. H.

This Book is Dedicated

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JAMES INWICK

I

THE BACKSLIDING OF PATE PEFFERS

YE mind the year whan the Auld Kirk was dung-doun? It was a late hairst that year, an' a mighty puir ane. First there cam a muckle daddin wind, juist whan the stuff was a' stan'in deid ripe, an' we'd gotten the roads cut an' a' ready to start, an' it threshed abüne half the crap on the grund. An' syne it begoud to poor, an' it poored on maist o' the month o' September, wi' awfu' jaws an' skelps o' rain, an' no' a blink o' the sun frae the tae end o' the week to the tither. There was a pouter o' snaw lyin on the stooks i' the upland fields afore a' was düne, an' the barley was jimp worth leadin in—whan we cam to pit it through the mill, there wasna eneuch to mak a dacent sample: it was juist fit to feed nowt.

I couldna help feelin kind o' wae for the mais-

ter—auld Britherston, that had the twa fairms o' Toombucht an' Cauldshiel; ye'll mind o' him?—a quait, hairmless man he was, an' never spak an ill word to onybody. He üsed to gang up and doun amang the stooks o' a mornin, pu'in a heid here an' a heid there, an' lookin gey doun i' the mooth, I can tell ye. We a' kent that he was ahint wi' his rent, and no' like to get muckle o' a let-aff frae the laird, an' wi' the shake an' the weet thegither, an' sic prices as were gaun, this hairst was like to break him. We a' peetied him, for he was an auld, düne body, an', of coorse he hadna oor prospec's.

Ye can easy understan' that if it was an ill back-end for the maister, it was faur frae pleasant for us workin folk. Oot ilka day an' a' day, takin doun the stooks atween the shoo'rs, an' layin them in braid-band, an' syne bindin them up, an' than haein't a' to dae ower again—never a dry steek on oor backs, an' oor verra buits beginnin to let in, an' the wind comin reishlin an' skreighin ower the muirs snell eneuch to gar ye whustle in your fingers—it was a weary hairst, I can tell ye. Mony's the nicht I brocht a sark-fu' o' sair banes hame wi' me.

There was juist ae thing that keepit us up, like, for there wasna muckle daffin gaun in the hairst-field that back-end. An' that was the thocht o' the gran' times that were comin for the pleuchman, whan we wad a' be set up in

bits o' fairms o' oor ain, an' nae need to dae a day's dairg for ony man but oorsels. An'ra Wabster, wha was first horseman to auld Britherston, üsed to tell us a' aboot it, the time we were sittin down on the bieldy side o' the stooks, haein oor baps an' yill at the twal-hoors.

"Ye'll süne see the hinder end o' this, lads," says he. "Nae mair slavin an' swattin at ithre folk's wark. Ye'll yoke whan ye like an' ye'll lowse whan ye like. Ye'll scoug it whan it's weet, and ye'll tak a cairt an' gang an' veesit your frien's ony day ye please. Ye'll a' be maisters thegither; ye'll sit ilka ane under his ain vine an' his ain feg-tree, an' enjoy the fruits o' the yirth," says he.

"I'm thinkin," says Dave Da'gleish the orra-man—he wasna very gleg o' the uptak, Dave, an' mony's the lauch we got oot o' him—"I'm thinkin," says he, "that thae craps 'll no' dae up here-a-way, sae nigh the hills. I ettled to pit the maist pairt o' my land under gress," says he, "wi' mebbe twa acres or thereby o' aits, an' a wheen baggies, an' twa-three rows o' tatties. I'm no' heedin muckle aboot growin fegs," says he.

"Houts, ye gowk, that's what they ca' a feegur o' speech," says An'ra; "it juist means that ye'll hae rowth o' a' things. Ye'll get your ain bit lan', and ye'll get the siller to stock it, and syne ye can grow ony kind o' crap ye like."

"But whaur's the land and the siller to come frae?" says Dave.

"Whaur frae?" says An'ra; "man, Dave, ye've a heid like a neep. Hae ye no' read it in the *Journal*? Hae ye no' heard plenty aboot it frae the pu'pit? Man, div ye no' ken that the Bill's passed an' the Kirk's doun? Whaur frae? *Frae the spiles o' the Kirk*, of coorse. That's whaur frae."

Weel, the time gaed by, an' we had the stuff a' into the yaird, an' the stacks theekit, an' syne we started to the pleuchin an' the tattieliftin. An' ae Sabbath day the minister gied it oot that on the neist he wad conduc' what he ca'd a hair-vest thanksgivin service. (That was the Sabbath afore the Martinmas term—sax weeks ahint his usual time: sae late the hairst was that year.) Noo, I maun describe to ye what 'n a differ the pu'in doun o' the Kirk had made in oor parish. At the ootset, it wasna that muckle, after a'; no' near han' sae muckle as some folk had expeckit. The Frees had been crawin unco crouse ower the dounfa' o' the Estaiblishment, as was but naiteral; an' it's my belief they thocht on the first Sabbath after the Bill wan through that the Auld Kirk door wad be steekit, an' a' oor folk wad come trapezin up the brae to their wee bit toom kirkie. Geordie Runciman, the carrier, said as muckle to mysel, ae nicht in Jenny Brockie's public. Geordie was a deacon in the

Free, and kent fine what the clash was amang them, an' he lat oot that there was some o' them fair dumbfoon'er'd whan they heard the jow o' oor bell, an' saw no' a soul comin up the brae but juist their ain hearers.

Oor kirk keepit as thrang as afore. Nae dou't we lost the laird, wha was mortal offendit at the way things had gaen, an' whirled past the kirk yett ilka Sabbath mornin wi' his neb cockit in the air, awa doun by, to hunker wi' the Yepiscopawlians. An' forby the laird, there was twathree mair o' the gentry drappit aff, an' mebbe an orra ane here an' there o' the workin folk, wha had no' been kirk-greedy at ony time, an' noo gied ower attendin a'thegither. But the maist feck juist sat canny, whaur their forebears had sat afore them, an' whaur they had naethin tō pay for bottom-room.

An' to mak up for them that gaed, we got a wheen new members—ye'll no' guess whaur frae: dod, man, we got them frae the Frees! There was auld Peter Peffers, wha fairmed Scraemuir—"Puir Pate," the folk ca'd him, for he was aye makin a puir mooth, an' him rovin in walth, as a'body kent. Weel, Pate said that he was a man o' principle, an' that he had come oot o' a Yerastian Estaiblishment at the Disruption, shakin the dust therof aff his shoon. "But noo," says he, "principle's got nae mair to dae wi't; the tae kirk's as guid as the tither, an'

there's naethin left for a body to testify against ava. An' there's me wi' a muckle bucht-seat o' my ain in the pairish kirk, an' no' a bawbee to pay for't; an' the Frees are aye ruggin at me for subscriptions—priggin siller here an' siller there; if it's no' seat-rents, it's Sustentation Fund, an' if it's no' that it's some ither objec'; their nieve's ne'er oot o' my pooch," says he. Sae what does Pate dae but lift his lines an' tak the gait down the brae, an' his haill faimily wi' him, an' it wasna sma'.

There was an unco stramash on the heid o't amang the Frees—I got that oot o' Geordie Runciman ower a gless; an' Tamson, their man, preached a haill hoor about the glorious memories o' Forty-Three an' backsliders, an' profane persons like Esau; an' aboot Jeroboam the son o' Nebat, wha gaed stravagin to anither kirk, an' made a' Israel to sin; an' aboot Demas, wha loo'd his gear mair nor his God, an' ran awa whan it cam to the bit, an' left Paul to fecht wi' the wild beas' a' his lane. They said that whiles he was greetin an' whiles he was sweirin in the pu'pit, he was that sair putt'n aboot. Of coorse, a'boday jaloused wha it was meant for, but Pate wasna there to hear, an' it did him nae hairm. The Scraemuir pew in the wast laft was filled up wi' his lads an' lasses—for Pate wear'd them a' to the kirk maist reg'lar ilka Sabbath day; an' it was as guid as a play to see the shog

he gied the ladle, whan Archie Howden the elder raxed it ower his shouther; as muckle as to say, "Na, na; ye've gotten me, but ye're no' gaun to get my siller."

They said that oor ain man wasna fell pleased wi' this addeetion to the membership; for Puir Pate had a maist astonishin memory, an' forby that, he aye markit doun the text and whiles the heids on the side o' his buik; an' the minister couldna gie an auld sermon ower again at an orra time withoot the haill parish hearin o't.

II

MR. INWICK'S DIPLOMACY

AWEEL, as I was sayin, the minister gied it oot that he was gaun to preach an extra sermon aboot the hairst, an' we a' lookit forrat til't, for he was aye by-ordinar gran' on thae occasions. Me an' the minister's cuist oot, as ye ken; but for a' that, ye'll no' hear me find ony faut wi' his preachin. Faur frae't, I'll alloo that I ne'er sat under ane I likit better—I couldna weel say less, for I had a guid han' mysel in the pitin o' him in.

I daur say ye'll ha' heard tell hoo that was? Ye see, there were twa candidates on the short leet for the Pairish o' Snawdon—baith birkies new aff the airns, for we had made up oor minds, richt or wrang (an' hoo faur wrang it was we fand belyve), that we wad hae a young, vee-gorous man for the place. The first ane that preached was a lang, lout-shouthered callant they ca'd Gillespie; he had braw certeeificates frae a' the Embro' professors, an' they said his heid was juist pang fu' o' lair. He did no' that ill i' the pu'pit, either, but the folk werena muckle taen wi' him, a' the mair whan a sough got aboot

that he was the laird's man. This ane said he had a squeaky vice, an' that ane said he had a mant, an' the tither ane that he clippit his words; an' An'ra Wabster objeckit to him because he had a gowd ring on his pinkie an' his hair shed doon the middle.

But whan the tither ane preached—a weel-far-rant lad he was, straucht an' souple, wi' an ee like a gled's, an' a vice ye nicht ha' heard frae the cairn on the Whaup Law—we a' said, “Yon's oor man.”

There was a wheen o' us foregaithered ae nicht at Jenny Brockie's—there was An'ra Wabster, an' Robbie Dodds the grieve at Scraemuir, an' Tam Arnott the herd at Wedderlairs, an' Wullie Herkis, and Dave Da'gleish, an' Adam Instant the dry-dyker, an' Jock Sives the mole-catcher, an' Dan Preacher the miller's man, an' mysel, an ane or twa mair. We süne got started on the crack aboot the candidates, an' it was easy seen hoo the thing wad gang gin the puir folk had their way.

“Gillespie 'll no' dae,” says Robbie Dodds; “he may gang doun wi' the gentry, but he'll no' gang doun wi' us. They're aye threepin that he's a terrible gran' scholard, but I thoct yon he gied us was gey füsionless stuff.”

“I canna awa wi' yon high English o' his,” says Dan Preacher.

“He's a puir, poukit-like cratur,” says Tam

Arnott; "I got a glisk o' him gaun down the street after the kirk skail'd, an', man, his shanks are nae stooter nor my rung. A waff o' wind wad blaw him ower."

"He had nae heids to his discoorse," says Adam Instant; "it was juist a mixtie-maxtie—I couldna keep a grup o' the threid o't, try as I likit. Noo, the laddie Broun has some smeddum in him, an' they say his faither was juist a workin-man like oorsels; he's a hamely chiel yon, or I'm cheated."

"I likit him fell weel," says Dave Da'gleish; "I likit yon bit awfu' aboot the wumman that tint the saxpence, an' soupit oot her hoose but an' ben, an' rakit oot the aiss-hole, an' lookit under the dresser, an' ahint the beds, an' rummilt the kist, an' turned a'thing tapsie-teerie till she fand it. It minded me o' my ain mistress whan she yokes to a cleanin. Man, he laid it aff bonny!"

"Yon's an orawtor," says An'ra; "there's nae dou't aboot it; the tither ane canna haud a candle to him. Noo, lads, we're a' o' ae way o' thinkin, an' we'll hae to pit oor best fit foremost, if Broun's to hae ony chance. Mind ye, the laird 'll be there, an' the factor, an' a' the gairdeners an' foresters, an' the servin men and wenches frae the big hoose, forby the fairmers an' the twa-three bit shopkeeper bodies down here-a-way, that live aff the brok o' the laird's custom—the haille clamjamfrey o' them, a' votin as they're

tell't; an' if we dinna tak tent, they'll hae their man shoved into the pairish ower oor heids. See here, Jims," he says to me—"ye're a gey pawkie chiel; there's no' mony can row a smoother bool than yoursel. We'll lippen to you. Ye maun tak a daunder through the fairm touns, atween this an' the 'lection nicht, an' mak suir o' the hinds. The meetin's no' till aught, an' they hae time eneuch to dicht their faces an' pu' on their Sunday breeks, after they've sorted their horse, an' come awa down by an' vote. Tell them the days o' patronage are ower, an' a' the poo'r's in their ain han's noo, and they maun come forrat, a' them that hae their names on the roll, an' gie their votes for Broun, the pleuchman's candidate. But I needna tell ye what to say; ye ken brawly yoursel. Juist you pit the maitter fair afore them, an' shoo them the richt airt, an' we'll gie the laird an' the maisters a bane to pike that'll keep their teeth gaun for a gey while!"

"But wha's to nominate Broun at the meetin?" says I; "ye needna think that I'll dae't. I'm no' feared to gie ye my opeenions here, or in the wricht's shop, or down at the smiddy, but I'm no' gaun to stan' up in the kirk afore a' the folk and mak a speech. I'm no' glib-gabbit eneuch for that," says I.

"Ne'er fash your thoum about that pairt o't," says An'ra; "I'm no' blate: get you the chaps doun to vote, an' I'll nominate Broun mysel, an'

no' think twice about it. An' noo that's a' settled—hae, lassie," says he, "bring us a gill apiece, for it's drouthy wark crackin about meenisters."

Weel, to be gettin on wi' my claivers, they a' pressed me an' fleeced on me till I büde to tak the job on han'. What I did was to gang roun' the fairm touns after lowsins time, an' juist pit the maitter fair afore the men, as An'ra had said. Whiles I spak to them in their hooses, an' whiles in the smiddy, whaur there were aye a wheen o' them at nicht gettin their pleuchairns shairpent. There were some wadna promise to atten' the meetin', maistly on accoont o' aye gettin a gliff o' the cauld ilka time they put on their Sunday's claes. But that was but an auntern ane here an' there. The maist o' them said at aince that they wad come doun an' vote for ony man the maisters didna want, if it wasna for haein sae faur to traivel, an' them wi' sair feet after pleuchin stibble a' day.

Sae ae night awa I gaes aince errand up to Scraemuir, an' gets a haud o' auld Pate Peffers. Pate had thrawn wi' the laird, I no' mind what about—drains, or fences, or the rabbits spilin his craps: the laird an' him were aye bickerin about ae thing or anither. There was nae hingin back wi' Puir Pate, I warrant ye, whan he heard what brocht me; no' that he cared a preen wha we got for a minister, but onythin that wad set the laird's back up was juist like a dram to him. He

was fine pleased to gie me what I wanted — the len' o' twa-three lang cairts to bring oor men doun to the votin.

"Is't a richt?" says An'ra Wabster to me, at the kirk yett, on the nicht o' the meetin.

"Ay," says I; "if a' hechts haud, it's a' richt" — an' juist than I heard the rummle o' the cairts comin doun the brae—"it's as richt's the mail," says I; "they'll be here in a jiffy. Awa ye gang in, an' dae your pairt noo. Hae ye gotten your speech a' ready?"

"I hae gotten 't in my pouch," says An'ra; an' I thocht his vice soonded a wee thing shaky.

"Ye'd better ha' gotten 't in your heid," says I.

"Nae fear o' me," says An'ra; "bide a wee, Jims, my man, an' ye'll hear somethin guid. I hae wrote doun a wheen things the laird 'll no like," says he.

Weel, in we gaed: Simpson o' Lempockshaws — him they ca'd Skelly Simpson, on accoont o' his gley'd een — was in the chair, being moderawtor during the vacancy. (Folk said Simpson wadna ha' been ill-pleased to get an offer o' the place himsel, Lempockshaws bein but a sma' livin.) Syne the laird got up an' made a bonny speech, a' aboot Gillespie, an' his certeeificates, an' his medals, an' the letters ahint his name; ye'd ha' thocht he was somethin mair nor mortal, sic a character he got. An' up got Durie o' Bogha', ane o' the elders, an' seconded the laird. "Is

there ony ither person to be nominated?" says Simpson. We a' lookit at An'ra, but he juist hotched in his seat, an' didna rise. "If there's nae ither person," says Simpson, "than—" Here I gied An'ra a dunsh wi' my elbow, an' up he got, but no' lookin himsel ava; ye'd ha' thocht he had taen a drappie ower muckle. First he stood on the tae leg an' syne on the tither, fuffin and blawin, an' glow'rin at Skelly Simpson like a wild-cat oot o' a whun buss. Syne he begoud to fummle in his pooch, an' pu'd oot his cutty pipe, an' it fell on the fluir an' brak in bits. At this the hizzies frae the big hoose, in the pew ahint, a' nudged ane anither an' giggled, an' An'ra got awfu' red in the face, an' the sweat fair poored aff him — ye never saw a man in sic a state o' praspiration a' your born days.

A' the time he was warslin wi' the things in his pooch, steerin them roun' an' makin grabs for his crum o' paper—like the way ye've seen the laddies guddlin for troot under the stanes. At the hinder end he got a haud o't, an' feshed it oot; but, dod, after he'd gotten 't, he could mak neither heid nor tail o't, it was that sma'-written, forby bein a' blobbit and crunkled. There he stüde, like a muckle stucky eemage, gruppín at the buik-buird, an' heezin his sel frae the tae leg on to the tither, an' goupin at Simpson as if he was a bogle; an' ye could see by the way his mooth gaed that he was tryin sair to speak, an'

mebbe thocht himself he was speakin, but no' a cheep cam.

"Speak oot, ye donnert eejit!" says Tam Arnott, wha was sittin by him on the tither side frae me; "what are ye fleyed for? Get on wi' your show, an' dinna stan' there whaizlin like a blastit stirk!" At this the folk wha were sittin near han' a' burst oot lauchin; an' An'ra at it again, pechin an' hawkin, an' hoastin like an auld wife, but nae mair able to get oot a word o' sense nor if he had been tongue-tackit.

"What's the man sayin?" says Simpson at last, oot o' a' patience; "I canna hear a single word." "He's nominatin Broun," says I, lood oot. "The Reverend Maister Broun, you mean," says Simpson, gey short, like; "is that the case, my man?" he says to An'ra. "Am I to understand that you nominate the Reverend Maister Broun for election to this kirk an' parish?" "Ay," says An'ra; an' that was a' the speech he ever made yet.

He tell't me, after it was a' by, that for as gash as he was amang coorsels, the thocht o' stan'in up an' speakin in the kirk brocht the cauld creep ower him. He kent fine he wad be nervish whan it cam to the bit, an' for fear o' no' mindin a' he meant to say, he scarted down his heids on the back side o' a paper poke, an' brocht it wi' him. "It was that mischancy crum o' paper spiled my speech, deil hae 't," he said to me; "I

couldna dae wantin 't an' I couldna dae wi't. Man, Jims, yon was an awfu' habble to be in! My wits were fair in a creel—I didna ken whaur I was, or what I was daein, nae mair nor a soukin bairn. Fegs, I'll ne'er lichtly the meenisters' job again! I wadna stan' in their shoon for any money."

It didna maitter, after a', aboot An'ra stickin his speech, for Broun was nominated an' seconded a' richt—I did that mysel; an' whan it cam to the countin, he got in by seeven votes ower the ither man. Gillespie's pairty gaed clean wud an' behaved theirsels maist unseemly, hiss in an' boo-hoo in, withoot ony regaird for whaur they were. Simpson, I maun say, spak up middlin sensible; he tell't them to respec' the place o' worship, if they didna respec' theirsels; an' said he had nae dou't we had gotten an excellent minister, an' he hoped the minority wad fa' in wi' the majority, an' mak it what he ca'd a "harmonious settlement."

There wasna muckle prospec' o' that at the meetin, it maun be said; for they raised sic a dust that it took Simpson a' his time to get a hearin, an' he was mighty weel pleased to skail the byke an' shank awa hame to Lempockshaws. I wasna sweer to get oot o' the shindy mysel. Some o' them had got to ken aboot my trokins wi' the pleuchmen, an' aboot the len' o' the lang cairts frae Scraemuir, an' they gied me a lot o'

ill tongue at the kirk yett. But I e'en jouked and lat the jaw gae by. The votin couldna be taen ower again; the proceedins were a' perfec'-ly reg'lar, as Simpson said; Broun was in, an' naebody could put him oot. Sae I didna need to mind their snash, an' I ne'er lat on I heard them.

III

THE MINISTER OF SNAWDON

THAT was the way Broun got the pairish o' Snawdon. He had uphill wark, as ye may weel believe, for a gey while. Ye ken the sayin —“as the laird bowffs, the loun yaff.” The laird took the strunt on the heid o't, an' gied ower comin to the kirk. Syne Liddell o' Wedderlairs an' Durie o' Bogha' left the session, an' Archie Howden had to carry roun' the ladle a' by himsel. An' some o' them were that faur left to theirsels that they lifted their buiks, an' gaed awa up the brae to the Frees. Nane o' them wad subscribe to gie the new meenister his cloak, an' they a' bided awa frae his ordination —juist like a when dorty bairns.

As I tell't ye afore, the meenister has crackit his credit wi' me sin' syne. But I maun alloo that nae man could ha' düne better, for a guid while after he was placed. He's a clever chiel, the meenister, an' nae mistake. It was a raivelled hasp he had to redd, an' he did it unco skeely. Of coorse, he kent fine what'n a fracaw there had been in the pairish, an' wha was for him an'

wha was against him ; but he keepit a calm sough, an' never made ony difference atween ane an' anither. He tried to be frien's wi' a'-body, an' the way he got on the richt side o' the folk was uncommon.

It wasna sae muckle his preachin that brocht them roun' as his fine, free way ; aye a cheery word when he passed ye on the road, an' aye somethin to crack aboot whan he gied ye a ca' ; an' he had a' their names an' fore-names, an' their trades, an' their troubles, an' a' aboot them, at his finger ends in nae time. He had nae pride in him, but for a' that he aye keepit his ain place, an' the folk thocht the mair o' him for 't. There wasna his maik at waddins an' kirsenins, he was that joky an' pleesant ; an' he was aye guid to the pair. An' he got on wi' the maisters juist as weel as wi' the workin folk. They a' showed him the cauld shouther to begin wi', but they couldna keep it up ; he was sic gran' company, a'body said, an' could sing a sang, or tak a han' at the cartes, or crack aboot the markets, wi' ony o' them. They had to gie in, an' sūne he was as chief as ye like wi' some o' them that had been ca'in him for a'thing.

Ane after anither, the silly bodies wha had taen the road up the brae came dranglin doun again—like laddies after playin the kip, lookin gey ashamed o' theirsels. Syne Durie begoud to atten' the session meetins, an' at the neist sacra-

ment, there was Liddell tae, back in his auld place. An' ae day the laird an' the meenister met on the road, an' walked up an' down for mebbe quarter o' an hoor, killoguin thegither; an', dod, the neist thing the folk heard was that the meenister had been up to the big hoose at his denner. He was sune as faur ben wi' the laird as wi' a'-body else, an' it wasna verra lang afore he had him down at the kirk again, sittin in his muckle airm-chair in the fore-breist o' the sooth laft as if he'd never been oot o't.


We were raal prood o' him, I can tell ye, hiz anes that had putt'n him in. Ae Hirin Friday I met in wi' Durie, down by—I served wi' him for a twal-month at Bogha', afore I gaed to Cauldshiel; an' he üsed aye to stop and speer at me hoo I was, an' if I had ony news, for he was a cracky body, an' no' a bad maister either. Somethin was said aboot the meenister, an' I couldna help remarkin, "Weel, Maister Durie, I no' think we've waled sic a puir gnaff after a'." He gied me a kind o' queer look, an', "Mebbe no'," says he, "but I'm thinkin it's mair by luck nor guid guidin, Jims, my man." An' wi' that he gaed awa, no' appearin ower weel pleased wi' the wipe I had gien him.

An' his preachin—haud your tongue! The like o't hasna been heard in Snawdon kirk, no, sin' Pendreigh gaed oot at the Disruption; an' the when auld folk wha minded o' Pendreigh

said that, for as poo'rfu' a preacher as he was, he wasna Broun's equal. As I said afore, I ne'er sat under ane that was mair exac'ly to my mind. For ae thing, he no' üsed the paper—no' even notes; an' he wasna like some o' thae ex-trump-ery preachers I've heard in my day, that haena but ae tune to their pipes, an' gie ye't ower an' ower again till ye're stawed wi't. He didna juist stan' up an' haver in the pu'pit, like a heap o' them; he aye spak sense, an' keepit a grup o' his subjec', an' ne'er flung awa a text till he'd gien ye the guts o't. He wasna feared to say oot what he thocht about onythin or onybody, an' he put things awfu' plain, whiles; an' he had a brow wale o' words forby—whan he took on han' to describe some o' thae things oot o' the Bible, losh, it was like seein a man pent a pictur o't afore your een. An' whan he got wrocht up into ane o' his flichts an' rapturs, wi' his airms sweein roun', an' the sweat dreepin aff him, an' the stour fleein oot the pu'pit cush'ns, an' auld Wattie Hogg coo'rin an' chitterin doun below at the precentor's desk, thinkin ilka meenute the muckle buik was gaun to cloit on the tap o' him—man, ye micht ha' heard a preen drap or a moose cheep in the kirk; the verra weans dursna play peep till he was düne. There was nae gantin an' doverin in oor kirk, I can tell ye. He can preach yet—I'll no' say onythin to the contrar'. But he's no' what he was; it's an awfu' peety ye didna hear him in his young days.

Ay, he was muckle run after; folk used to come to Snawdon kirk frae the ither pairishes roun' aboot, he got sic a name in the kintra-side. Of coorse the Frees wadna gie in til't that he was as guid as their ain man—no' that ony o' them had ever heard him, but that didna maitter. Ye ken what the Frees are; it was juist like them. Weel, weel; ilka chuckie thinks its ain cleckin the bonniest; that's but naiteral. But what way ye canna haud up your ain man without rinnin doun ither folks', that's what beats me a'thegither. I've heard them say mysel that the Auld Kirk folk were juist a wheen reprobants, an' Moderates, an' puir lost craturs like the Ninnyvites, wha didna ken their richt han' by their left; an' as for gettin the Gospel frae an Auld Kirk meenister, ye micht as weel expec' to get milk frae a yell coo.

They're a' brunt wi' the same burn-airn, a' the Frees. There was Geordie Runciman the carrier—a frien' o' my ain, bein mairrit on the wife's auntie, an' a raal douce, obleegin chiel; but as be-gotted as ony o' them. I mind o' fa'in in wi' Geordie, ae nicht no' lang after Broun was settled; he was staivin doun the street, an' I kent fine what airt the wind was settin wi' him. "Chainge your breath, Geordie?" says I. "Weel," says he, "I dinna mind if I hae a cawker." Sae in we gaed to Jenny's, whaur we fand a wheen mair o' them sittin, haein their smoke an' their gless.



Syne Geordie begoud to bleeze awa aboot their man, what a deevil he was amang the doctrines, an' what terrible gran' sermons he gied them. It kind o' stuck in my crap to hear him gaun on at siccan a rate, an' I couldna help pitin in a word for oor man. But d'ye think Geordie wad listen? No' him; it was Tamson this, and Tamson that; an' as for Broun, his maitter was juist a blash o' words, an' his deelevery no' muckle better nor play-actin.

"Noo, Geordie," says I til him at last, "ca' canny; ye've nae richt to sit there an' criticeeze a man ye've no' heard. See here, I'll mak a bargain wi' ye. I'll gae up neist Sabbath day to your kirk, gin ye'll come doun the neist again to oors; an' I'll tell ye what I think o' Tamson, an' ye'll tell me what ye think o' Broun. That's fair, is't no'?" I says to them wha were in the room wi' us.

They a' said it was fair, but Geordie swithered; of coorse I kent fine he didna like bein seen in the pairish kirk, mair especially wi' bein an office-bearer in the Free, an' haein a character to keep up.

"Na, na, Jims, my mannie," says he, "come up wi' me an' walcome, an' ye'll be walkin in the way o' grace if ye dae; but I canna bind myself to gang wi' you. It wadna be seemly, an' me a deacon," says he.

"Na, na, Geordie, my mannie," says I, "fair

hornie : if I'm to gang up the brae, you'll hae to come down, deacon or no' deacon. Suirly they'll no' tak awa your office frae ye, an' cast ye oot o' the synagogue, for a first faut? Are we no' tell't in the Buik aboot the sodger body, I dinna mind his name, wha got leave to boo down in the hoose o' Rummun? Are the Frees mair stric' nor the Jews?" says I; "c'wa, man—let's hae nae mair argle-bargin; sae 'düne,' an' gie's your loof on't!"

Weel, what wi' me tormentin him, an' the ither fallows a' eggin him on, Geordie chapp'd han's; an' the neist Sabbath mornin him an' me met at the toun cross, an' gaed up the brae thegither.

They tak the bawbees in a brod, up at the Free, an' ane o' their elders was stan'in ahint it at the door. "Is't himsel the day?" says Geordie to the elder, michty consequential, wi' his way o't. "Ay," says the elder, "it's himsel." "That's a guid thing," says Geordie; an' in we gaed.

It was himsel, an' nae mistake. An unco screed he gied us, a' aboot oreeginal sin, an' the covenant o' warks, an' circumceesion, an' a heap mair o' their Free Kirk freets. I thoct he wad ne'er be düne. He said that he wad address hissels to us as puir sinfu' worms, faimishin for the Word; but I can tell ye, lang afore he got near han' his personal application, I was faimishin for my denner.

"Weel, hoo did ye like him?" says Geordie, as sūne as we had gotten oot; "noo, wasna yon a roosin sermon?"

No' to tell ye a lee, I thocht him little better nor an auld haveril; an' as for his sermon, it seemed to me puir baugh stuff, juist aboot as wersh as a kail custock. But I didna say that to Geordie, no' wantin to set up his birse.

"Hoo did I like him?" says I; "ou, no' that ill; but suirly he's gotten an awfu' dose o' the cauld, puir body."

"What gars ye think that?" says Geordie, no' verra weel pleased, like.

"I thocht he was gey roopy," says I; "but mebbe I'm wrang"—the fac' bein he had been croupin like a craw, the way he aye spak, as I kent weel eneuch.

"I didna remark it," says Geordie, gey snippy; an' he askit me nae mair questions.

Weel, he keepit his tryst, an' Sabbath come aught days we met at the cross again, an' gaed to the pairish kirk. The minister was in gran' fettle that day, an' preached ane o' his best sermons. But I wasna gaun to speer at Geordie what he thocht o' him; no' likely. After we'd gotten oot by, an' lichtit oor pipes, we stapped awa doun the road thegither, an' Geordie was aye takin anither look at me, but I ne'er lat on.

"I'm sayin," says he, after a gey while.

"Ay?" says I.

"Ye've sma' need o' a soondin-buird in your kirk," says he; "ye've mair need o' tow in your lugs. Gosh, yon man's fit to deave ye!"

"D'ye think sae?" says I; an' no' a word mair.

"I'm sayin," says he again, after we'd gaen mebbe anither mile an' a bittock.

"Ay?" says I.

"D'ye ken your kirk's skail'd the best pairt o' half an hoor afore oors? Yon man gies ye scrimp meesure," says he.

"D'ye think sae?" says I. An' thinks I to mysel, "Fegs, we may weel be prood o' oor meen-ister, gin that's a' the faut ye can find wi' him!" I kent braw an' weel what Geordie had it on his tongue to say a' the time—what ye 'll hear the Frees aye sayin aboot a' preachers but their ain—that he was cauld, an' wanted unction, an' hadna the ruit o' the maitter in him. But he thocht shame to say't; his conscience wadna let him, for a' as be-gotted as he was. He didna blaw sae muckle aboot Tamson for a gey while after; an' whan I tell't the chaps, they a' said I was a fell body, an' that I had come ower Geordie raal fine.

IV

NOLO EPISCOPARI

AWEEL, no' to leese oot my story—an' I dou't ye'll be thinkin me as lang-windit as Tamson himsel — aboot the hairst-sermon, an' the unco steer it made in the pairish. But afore I come to that, there's ae thing I maun tell ye, to let ye understan' hoo things fell oot, an' that is, the way I cam to be made an elder. Ye didna ken I was ane? Mebbe no'; I haena ackit for a gey while. But I'm no' tellin ye ony lee — Jims Inwick's a rulin elder o' the kirk, for a' that.

It was a whilie after he'd been settled, aboot a twal-month or sae, that ae day the meenister sent up word to me to come doun to the manse an' see him. I had nae dreed o' what he wanted wi' me, but I kent I hadna been in ony faut, an' I was fine pleased to stap doun an' gie him a ca', for him an' me was grit in thae days. He was sittin amang his buiks whan the lassie took me ben, wi' his lamp lichted, an' his papers a' laid oot afore him, howkin his harns for a sermon, for it was Saiturday nicht.

“Come in, Jims,” he says to me; “come in by

an' sit ye doun. I'm blythe to see ye. Hoo's a' wi' ye?"

"I daurna complain," says I; "hoo's yoursel, sir?"

"Fine, thank ye," says he; "what's daein up at Cauldshiel?"

"Ou, no' that verra muckle," says I; "we're gey thrang singlin neeps; they're comin awa on us juist fast eneuch in this growin wather, an' we're short-handit, ye ken. I'm thinkin the maister maun be gey near the end o' his tether. He canna pit the strength on the place that it wad need," says I.

"I'm sorry to hear that," says he, an' he lookit it, tae; "it's a peetifu' sicht, Jims, an honest man wi' his back to the wa' at the end o' his days."

"Ye're richt there, sir," says I; "a' body feels for auld Britherston. Yon's the dourest land that ever I was on; it's a' till thegither."

"So they tell me," says he; an' syne he sat for a bit lookin at me, an' me lookin at him, waitin to hear what he had to say.

At last he says to me, "Weel, Jims, I daur say ye'll be wonderin what for I've brocht ye a' the road doun by the nicht. To tell ye the trüth, I want to hae a quiet crack wi' ye on a maitter o' importance. I'm thinkin o' makin an addeetion to the session, Jims."

"An' I'm suir it's time," says I. "Archie

Howden's but a thieveless, daidlin cratur; an' Durie has an unco conceit o' himsel, an' no' that muckle sense wi't; an' as for Liddell, he's an eldrin man noo, an' gettin gey doitit. I'm thinkin they'll no' be muckle worth to ye, ony o' the three o' them. Ay, there's nae dou't ye wad be a' the better o' ane or twa new elders. Hae ye gotten onybody parteec'lar in your mind, sir, gin I may speer at ye?"

"Weel, yes, Jims," he says; "I hae gotten somebody in my mind. There's a man I've had my ee on sin' I cam to this pairish; a man I dinna think could be ca'd thieveless or senseless: as for the conceit, we'll let that flee stick to the wa'—I daur say there's nane o' us the waur o' a wee bit dose o' that same. I'm set on haein that man for an elder, an' I'll tell ye wha it is. It's juist yoursel, Jims."

"Me!" says I. Lordsake, ye micht ha' coupit me ower wi' a strae! The thocht o' sic a thing had never entered my heid, an' I couldna trow my ain hearin. "Me an elder!" says I; "g'wa wi' ye, meenister, ye're takin your nap aff me."

"Deil a bit," says he—no' that he üsed thae verra words, but it was to the same effec'—"I'm in deid sober earnest. Ye're the verra man for the job, Jims; I've been makin inquiries, an' I hae satisfied mysel that your appintment wad be weel received by the congregation at lairge. I dinna want ye to say either ay or no the

nicht; it's ower sarious a maitter to be settled aff-hand, at ae doun-sittin. I want ye to think ower't at your leesure, an' look at it a' ways, an' hear what the wife has to say til't. Ye'll no gang faur aff the road gin ye let yourself be guidit by the wife, Jims, for she's a maist sensible wumman."

"Deed, she's a' that," says I; "but na, na—I'm no' fit for the poseetion; an' forby that, I'm thinkin the elders ye hae the noo wadna be ower weel pleased to see me amang them. Durie an' me 'grees best separate; an' Liddell tell't me to my face, no' that verra lang syne, that I was nae better nor a mischief-maker an' an agitawtor."

"Ye needna fash yoursel aboot that," says he; "I've made it a' richt wi' the session. They're a' willin to let by-ganes be by-ganes, an' to gie ye the richt han' o' fellowship."

"Weel, meenister," says I til him, "there's nae-body like ye for castin glaumer ower folk; I wadna ha' trowed that gin ye hadna tell't me yoursel. But na—it'll no' dae. I'm muckle obleeged to ye for the offer, but I couldna accep' o't. It's ño' for the likes o' me to be shovin mysel forrat that gait. I aye mind what my auld faither, honest man, üsed to tell us—Hew abüne your heid, an' ye'll get a spale in your ee. I ken fine what some o' them wad be sayin—'Him an elder, set him up! A common pleuchman!'"

"Weel, Jims," he says, "that may be, I'll no' say. There's aye a wheen sma'-minded, spitefu' cratur that'll cast it up to ye that ye're this an' ye're that; I've had it düne to mysel. But sensible men like you an' me dinna need to mind sic clash, nae mair nor the bizzin o' a flee at your lug. An' I'll no' hear ye lichtly your callin. It's the maist auncient o' a' trades, an' the ane the warld canna dae wantin. 'The king himsel is sair'd by the field': that's in the Bible. As lang as ye dae an honest day's wark at the pleuchtail, ye dinna need to think shame o' your glaury buits. Ye're a great Leeberal, I hear, Jims—what they ca' a demmycrat."

"Weel," says I, "I'm no' juist what ye'd ca' a Tory."

"Than ye may be thankfu'," says he, "that ye're a member o' the freest an' maist leebereal kirk that's gaun. In oor kirk, as ye nicht ken by this time, Jock's as guid as his maister, an' the puir man has as muckle say as the rich. It's no' braidclaith an' a gowd ring that maks a man respeckit in the kirk, but juist the man himsel; an' if the man has a guid name, an' if he's worthy o' the eldership, we dinna look at his graith or his gear. I want a' classes representit on my session, an' that's ane o' my reasons for askin you," says he.

"That's weel said, sir," says I, "an' I'll gae in wi' every word o't; but for a' that, I dou't I'll

hae to refuse. I'll no say ony mair that to be an elder's abüne my station, but I ken fine it's abüne my poo'rs. Ye'll easy find somebody that's mair like the thing nor me, an' better able to dae the duties o' the office."

"But div ye ken what the duties are, Jims?" says he; "let's hear, noo. What is't an elder has to dae that ye're fleyed to tackle?"

Weel, whan he put it to me like that, an' I begoud to turn the thing ower in my mind, I fand it wasna that muckle I did ken aboot it, after a'. I had aye understüde that an elder took up the bawbees, an' syne coonted them; an' that he offeeciated on sacramental occasions; an' sat in jidgment wi' the meenister whan some lassie had made a mistake, or some man an' his wife had been to the fore wi' the kirk in the way o' mairrage. An' forby that, I had a kind o' notion that an elder wasna like ither folk, bein lifted up, in a mainner o' speakin, abüne the lave; an' though he wasna expeckit to preach, he micht be ca'd upon whiles to pit up a bit prayer—no' that I had ever heard tell o' Durie or Liddell takin pairt in ony speeritual exerceese: an' that he büde to keep elders' hoors—though what they micht be I've ne'er been able to mak oot, for I'm suir I've gaen awa frae a frien's hoose on the chap o' twal, an' left Archie Howden sittin wi' a fu' tumbler afore him. But as for onythin mair, I was gey bazy.

"Weel, Jims," says the meenister to me, "I see ye're no' verra clear on the subjec', an' mebbe I'd better pit a fac' or twa afore ye, to help ye to mak up your mind."

"Say awa, sir," says I—though I kent I had nae business to be sittin there hearin him if I didna mean to accep', for there was nae haudin oot against his whilly-wha'in; gie him time, an' he could weise a body ony gait he wanted.

"Weel, to begin wi'," says he, "we're tell't that an elder maun be the husband o' ae wife."

"That's a' right," says I; "ane's eneuch for ony man, let a-be an elder."

"An' it's further required," says he, "that an elder maun aye stick up for his meenister, richt or wrang; mair especially when he's wrang, for than he has maist need o' backin." Wi' this he gied a lauch, an' I saw it wasna meant sarious, sae I e'en gied a lauch tae.

"But here's a buik that tells ye a' aboot it," says he, an' he feshed a muckle auld buik down aff the shelf, ca'd *Acks o' Assembly*; "juist listen for a meenute, an' ye'll be able to answer gin onybody speers at ye what an elder ocht to be. *He maun be a man o' guid life an' godly conversation.*"

"Weel," says I, "it's no' for me to say, but I hae aye tried to dae richt, an' I've ne'er had to stan' the session, onyway."

"*He maun be circumspec' in his walk,*" says he, aye readin oot the buik.

"Guid kens I'm a' that," says I; "an' the way folk turn ower what ye say, an' clatter ahint your back noo-a-days, a body has muckle need to be."

"*An' he maun be stric' in his observation o' the Lord's day,*" says he.

"Weel," says I, "ye ken yoursel, sir, ye never miss me a day oot the kirk, snaw or blaw."

"*An' he maun be reg'lar in keepin up worship in his faimily,*" says he.

"Me an' the mistress reads a chapter maist ilka nicht," says I, "afore we gang to oor bed, an' aye on the Sabbath e'enin."

"An' yet ye wad threep it doun my throat," says he, "that ye're no' fit to be an elder! Gang your ways hame, Jims, my man, an' hae a bit crack ower 't wi' the mistress. An' gin ye read a chapter the nicht, let it be the third o' first Timothy; it's 'deacons' there, but juist you ca't 'elders,' an' ye'll no' be faur aff the bit. An' come doun by an' see me this nicht week, an' if I dinna mak an elder o' ye afore verra lang, I'm cheated, that's a'."

I kent fine hoo it wad be whan I gaed hame an' tell't the wife. She was neither to haud nor to bin,' an' as for gettin in a word o' reason wi' her, ye micht as weel ha' tried to cog a mill-wheel wi' a spurtle. "Did I no' say that was what he wanted wi' ye?" says she.

"Weel," says I, "if ye said it, it maun ha' been in to yoursel, for I didna hear ye."

"An' whae's got a better richt to be made an elder nor you, I wad like to ken?" says she; "whae's come o' mair dacent folk? whae's conductit himsel mair respectable? whae's been mair reg'lar in the kirk? whae's düne mair for the meenister? Was't no' you that put him in, as I've heard ye brag aboot mony a time? 'A body shouldna rax abüne his reach,' say you? Man, Jims, I wonder to hear ye. I thocht ye had mair sense. Hoo is't abüne your reach? Ye wad fit the place fine—as weel as auld Archie Howden, I'm suir. An' my faither was an elder o' the kirk, and his faither afore him, an' eh, but I wad be proud to see my man made ane tae, an' lookit up to by a'body, an' sittin in coonsel wi' the meenister himsel!"

"Ay, that's juist whaur it is," says I; "juist like the vanity o' weemen-folk. Ye think ye'll be upsides wi' your Auntie Bell, an' that's a ye're heedin aboot."

"Upsides wi' my Auntie Bell, forsooth!" says she; "muckle I care for her! D'ye think I wad even Geordie Runciman wi' you? G'wa' wi' ye! What's a deacon in the Free by an elder in the Establisht?"

"Wheesht, wumman, wheesht," say I; "hoo's a body to collec' his thochts, an' your tongue gaun like a pen gun? Did I no' tell ye what

the meenister said, that this was a solemn maitter, an' no' to be ca'd through in a hurry? Get down the Buik, an' find Timothy; we'll hear what he's got to say on the subjec' afore we mak up oor minds."

"But this is no' about elders," says she, after she'd fand the place; "this is about bishops."

"Gang on or ye come to deacons," says I; "that's a' the same as elders, the meenister says. Are ye at the bit noo?"

"Ay, I'm at it," says she, an' syne she begoud to read: "*Likewise the deacons maun be grave, no' dooble-tongued*—weel, Jims, I'm suir you're no' guilty o' licht talk or leein—*no' gien to muckle wine*—he disna say ye're ne'er to tak a dram—*no' greedy o' filthy lucre*—there's no' muckle o' that comes oor way. An' here's a bit about their wives."

"Ay, let's hear that," says I.

"*Even sae their wives maun be grave*," says she—"weel, naebody can ca' me glaikit—*no' slanderers*—it was ne'er my way to misca' my neebours—*sober*—there's nae van brings drink to my door—*faithfu' in a' things*—weel, though I say't that shouldna, I've been an eident wumman a' my days. I've made ye a thrifty wife, Jims; I've no' hained mysel. I canna see there's onythin in what Timothy says to keep ye frae bein an elder."

"Mebbe no'," says I, "but we'll hae to sleep

on't, guidwife. We hae gotten a haill week to think it ower, an' see ye haud your wheesht about it wi' the neebours—I'm no' wantin to be made the clash o' the kintra-side afore there's ony occasion."

V

ORDEAL BY ORDINATION

AWEEL, the neist Saiturday nicht I gaed awa doun to the manse, an' after the days an' nights I had dree'd wi' the wife, I kent fine hoo it wad end wi' the meenister. I wad juist hae to dae like the lasses—say no, an' tak it.

"There's juist ae thing I wad like to say to ye, sir," I says to him; "I'm no' ane o' thae watter-drinkers."

"I no' think ony the waur o' ye for that," says he.

"I've aye been in the way o' takin my bit drappie," says I; "I mind what my auld faither üsed to say—'I ne'er loo'd watter in my shoon, an' my wame's made o' better leather.' But for a' that, he was a maist temperate man, an' I've aye been the same mysel."

"I've aye got that character o' ye, Jims," says he.

"Weel, sir," says I, "ye see there's a wheen o' us meets, aince or twice in the week, in Jenny Brockie's public. There's nane o' us taks ower muckle—juist a gless, an' whiles an eke; an' we

hae oor smoke an' oor crack thegither, an' syne gang oor ways hame atween nine an' ten, as sober as yousel. Noo, I wad like to ken if ye think that's onyways wrang?"

"Weel, Jims," he says to me, "I'm no' gaun to preach what I dinna practeese. Whiles I hae a gless mysel in a frien's hoose, an' a pipe an' a crack wi't, an' I no' think I'm daein wrang, or ens I hope I wandna dae't. I ken what a but an' a ben's like, for I was brocht up in ane mysel. Ye canna weel meet wi' your neebours an' acquaintance, the time the wife's pitin the weans to their beds an' reddin up the hoose; an' I've aye said the workin man has as muckle need o' his public as the rich man has o' his club, an' mebbe mair. As lang as it disna lead to excess, or neglec' o' a man's ain fireside, I'll no' condemn it. I only wush, for your ain sakes, ye got better stuff to drink."

"Ou, the stuff's no' that bad," says I. "Ye see, Jenny keeps twa kinds. There's the kind she salls to the Irish an' ither gangrel bodies—püshion-Paddy,' the folk ca't, for they say that aince a Donegal man dee'd wi' drinkin a mutchkin o't—an' there's the kind she sairs to her reg'lar customers, an' there's no' muckle wrang wi' that, unless mebbe the bung-hole's been raither near the spoot-well whiles. . . . But I was wantin to speer this at ye, meenister," says I; "div ye think, if I was bein made an elder, I wad hae to bide

awa frae the public? Min' ye, it's no' the drink I'm heedin aboot; I can dae fine wantin that. But I'll no' hide it frae ye, I wad be laith to gie up the bit meetin after the day's wark, an' the chaps drappin in frae the fairm touns roun' aboot, ilka ane wi' his crum o' news, an' a'boday seekin my opeenion on the politics, or the wather, or the chance o' wages gaun up, or some pint in your ain last sermon. There's nae dou't it's a cheery way o' pitin in an hoor or twa."

"Weel, Jims," he says, "I'm no gaun to lay doun ony rules for ye, what ye maun dae or what ye maunna dae. Ye'll hae to tak coonsel wi' your ain conscience an' common-sense. Ye ken as weel as me there's mair expeckit o' them that's set apairt to the eldership, an' it behooves them to be extra carefu' no' to offend."

"I've heard Archie Howden say they're the saut o' the yirth," says I.

"I wanda gang juist as faur as to say that," says he; "but onyway they're like a city set on a hill-tap, that canna be hid. Ye mind what Paul says—a' things are lawfu' for me, but a' things are no' expedient. I couldna gie ye ony better guidin nor that, Jims, though I preached for a month o' Sundays."

"Weel, sir," says I, "I'll hae to be daein wi't. An' gin ye think I winna shame the place, I'll juist accep', an' dae the best I can."

"That's richt," says he; "I'm raal pleased to

hear ye say't. We've aye been guid frien's, you and me, Jims, an' I hope we'll be better yet."

"I'm no' feared for that, sir," says I—little thinkin o' what was to come—"you and me'll daiker on thegither fine. But I'll no' hae to speak in the kirk, wull I? I no' want to mak a muckle füle o' mysel afore a' the folk, an' that's juist what I wad dae gin I had to speak."

"No' a word ye need to say," says he; "whan I pit the questions to ye aboot fa'in in wi' the hail Confession o' Faith, an' aye uphaudin the Presbyterian form, ye'll stan' fornent the pu'pit an' gie your heid a nod. That's a' ye'll hae to dae."

The mistress was awfu' föll whan I gaed hame an' tell't her. She was like to dance her lane, an' it was a' I could dae to stop her frae fleein in to the neebour wives an' tellin them aboot me bein made an elder. "Mercy me, wumman," says I, "suirly it'll keep! They'll a hae't süne eneuch. For ony sake, haud your tongue aboot it or aince it's gien oot in the kirk, an' let a body hae some peace in his life. I'm no' seekin to be a public character."

But it was nae üse. I micht as weel ha' spoken to a stane dyke. The verra neist day, whan I cam hame at denner-time, there was Jess an' the kimmers a' stan'in wi' thier boynes an' pails at the siver, an' her tongue gaun like the clapper o' a mill. I kent fine by the looks they gied me

that they had a' gotten the news, an' it wasna lang, as ye may weel believe, afore it gaed clinkin through the pairish.

If there's ae thing I canna bide, it's bein ken-speckle, an' haein my name in a'bod's mooth; an' that was juist what I büde to pit up wi', mornin, nüne, an' nicht, for a gey while. The maist o' the folk, I maun say, took it weel eneuch, an' said the meenister couldna ha' waled better. But a'bod's wasna alike. The wife was sair putt'n about wi' her Auntie Bell, for a' she wad say, whan she heard o't, was, "Preserve us! Jims an elder! Weel, weel; the langer we live we see the mair ferlies." But I tell't Jess no' to fash hersel for an ill-willy auld jaud o' a deacon's wife, wha was juist like to burst wi' jealousy an' vexation at me gettin a lift abüne her ain man.

Geordie Runciman lookit gey soor himsel whan I tell't him, though he said he was pleased to hear o't, an' he hoped I wadna live to rue the day. "Ye'll hae to tak tent to yoursel, Jims," says he; "ye'll hae to be like Agag, wha walkit delicately. It's a wechty chairge, as I've heard godly Maister Tamson say mony a time. It's an auld byword that glasses an' lasses are bruckle ware; an' I'm thinkin the same micht be said o' meenisters an' elders. Ye'll hae to tak unco care that ye dinna jaup yoursel, as ye gae along the clarty road o' this sinfu' world."

"I no' need you to preach at me, Geordie,"

says I; "ye're no' at ane o' your prayer-meetins the noo. The meenister kens brawly what he's daein, an' he wadna ha' askit me gin he hadna thocht me guid eneuch."

"Aye, aye," says he—ye ken their drauntin, grainin way—"I'm thinkin ye winna be sae parteec'lar in your kirk as hiz folk up the brae. Eh, but it's an unco thing to be a Free Kirk elder! There's few coonted worthy, an' ony man that gets the place wi' hiz disna need to care though he dees the morn. But I'm thinkin it wadna dae for your meenister to be ower pernicketty; nae dou't he maun hae a session o' some kind, puir body."

"Ye may think what ye like," says I, "but it's easy seen ye ken naethin aboot it. Oor meenister's nane sae scant o' clean pipes that he needs to blaw wi' a brunt cutty."

"Mebbe no'," says he, "but ye needna be in sic a fizz. I'm no' sayin onythin against you or your meenister neither. But a'body kens the Auld Kirk's gey shaky, an' nae dou't a frail stoop's better nor nane ava."

"Weel, Geordie," says I, "the way ye speak, a body micht think ye'd ha' likit weel gin ye had gotten the offer o' the place yoursel."

"Me!" says he; "I wadna fyle my fingers wi't! Me an elder in your kirk? Man, div ye no' ken what the Bible says? 'I wad rather keep a door in the Free Kirk than dwell in the

tents o' the Estaiblishment.' Na, na; I think ower muckle o' the dear-bocht preevileges o' Forty-Three. I wadna niffer wi' you, Jims, elder though ye be."

We had some mair words, an' the upshot o't a' was that Geordie an' me pairted no' verra frien'ly. I didna think muckle o' that, but I maun say I was disappointed wi' An'ra Wabster. The first time I met in wi' An'ra, after he'd gotten the news, was ae mornin up at the mains; an' afore a' the men an' the workers he made believe to kink wi' lauchin, an' gied a guffaw that ye micht ha' heard twa fields aff. "Hoo, hoo!" says he; "here's the new elder! Aff wi' your bannets, lads, an' mind ye bink doun an' say 'sir' whan ye speak til him, or he'll hae ye up afore the session for want o' proper respec'!"

"What's the maitter wi' ye, An'ra?" says I, no' wantin to loss my temper wi' him; "ye've suirly risen aff your wrang side the day. What are ye gawfin an' bletherin there aboot?"

"Hear til him!" says he; "he downa be spoken to, he's that big! See hoo he hauds up his heid, like a hen drinkin watter! Aye, aye! Sic braw company he's got into—rubbin shouthers wi' the maisters, nae less! There's nane o' his auld billies guid eneuch for him noo."

"Man, An'ra," says I til him, "that's a daft-like way to carry on. I've neeboured ye noo for

a gey twa-three years, an' I'm suir ye've ne'er fand me upsettin to my aquals or creengin to my betters. I'm neither up nor down wi' bein made an elder o' the kirk, an' if ye hae onythin to say against me takin the office, I wad like to ken what it is?"

"I hae juist this to say," says he, "that ye'll mak a show an' a objec' o' yoursel to the haill pairish. It's fair rideec'lous; I canna mak oot what Broun was thinkin o' whan he askit ye."

"Mebbe ye think he should ha' askit some ither body," says I; "an' if ye wull tak the dorts, I canna help it. As for makin a show o' mysel, an elder disna need to stan' up in the kirk an' gie a speech. It's whan a body taks on han' to mak a speech, an' syne fa's through 't, that he maks himsel maist rideec'lous, to my way o' thinkin."

Ye should ha' seen the face that An'ra put on whan I gied him this wipe; his ill-natur fair got the better o' him, an' he girmed like a sheep'sheid in a pair o' tangs. "Weel, Maister Inwick," says he, "I needna speer at ye if ye'll be doun at Jenny's the nicht? Nae dou't ye'll be hobnobbin wi' the gentry noo, an' the public wull be ower low for ye. We'll no' hae the pleasure o' your company ony mair doun by, I'm thinkin?"

Noo, thinks I to mysel, mak up your mind til't, Jims, my man; ca' the nail to the heid; it has

to be, an' the hetter war the sünner peace. So I ups an' says til him, "Weel, An'ra, I'll no' say but ye're richt. I daur say it wadna look bonny for an elder o' the kirk to be kent as a frequenter o' public-hooses. It's different wi' the likes o' you, that naebody taks ony notice o'; but a man in my poseetion has mair nor himsel to consider. So ye'll no' see me down by, neither the nicht nor the morn's nicht, nor at ony ither time." An' wi' that I gaed awa an' left him, afore he fand breath to say onythin mair. I kent it was nae üse tryin to come ower An'ra Wabster wi' fair words or flytin, for he had a maist unceevil tongue, an' aince he had taen the flings, he was as thrawn as the hint leg o' a cuddy.

I no' mind o' the wife bein sae upliftit wi onythin, a' the time we've been thegither, as wi' me bein made an elder. I was made muckle o', thae days, I can tell ye; there was naethin ower guid for Jims; it minded me o' the time whan I was coortin her, four-an'-thretty year syne. An' whan it cam roun' to the Saiturday nicht afore the day I was to be ordained, what I büde to gae through in the way o' reddin up! She was that fiky ye nicht ha' thocht I was some young quean bein buskit for her waddin. First she set tae an' stairched an' airned my sark and collar, an' syne she got my guid-anes oot o' the kist, an' darned a wee hole in the coat aneath the oxter, an' hung them a' afore the fire to tak oot the

lirks. An' after supper-time, in comes Ecky Blair, the herd at Toombucht, wi' his shears—she had trysted Ecky withoot ever lettin on to me—to gie me a clip; for she said it wad never dae for me to be stan'in up in the transe afore a' the folk an' my heid like a heather cowe. An' on the Sabbath mornin she gart me shave mysel till my chafts were like a year-auld bairn's, an' creish my pow wi' the claggiest pomatum she could come by; an' syne she tied on me a bonny new craig-cloth she had coft down by, as white as the driven snaw.

“Eh, Jims, my man,” says she, “but ye look fine in your braws! Go, ye nicht be a meenister yoursel!”

“But what way are ye no gettin on your things, guidwife?” says I; “are ye no' gaun to the kirk the day?”

“Me gang to the kirk?” says she; “no' likely! The verra thocht o't brings a dwam ower me. Na, na, Jims; gang your gait an' warsle through the best ye can; I'll hear a' about it frae the neebours whan they come hame—they're a' gaun. An' see ye keep oot o' the dibs an' no' draible your buits, after a' the trouble I've had to mak them bonny an' clean.”

Aweel, awa I gaed my lane, feelin gey queer. There was a by-ordinar congregation that day; a'boddy that could win was there, excep' that thrawn deevil An'ra Wabster. “They'll no' see

me at their ordination opera"—that was what he gaed aboot sayin; so they tell't me.

The folk a' said the meenister did awfu' weel that day; he was on the duties o' office-bearers an' kirk members; but as for me, I heard ne'er a word o't. There I was, sittin in a chair forment the pu'pit, wi' Durie on the tae side o' me, an' Liddell an' Archie Howden on the tither; an' my heid was in the mirligoes—a'thing gaed soomin roun' aboot me, an' the meenister's vice soounded in my lugs as sma' as the cheepin o' a sparrow. But I minded o' what my auld faither used to say "He that wad eat the kirkel maun crack the nit;" gin I was to be an elder, I büde to gae through wi' bein ordained; an' after a', it wad süne be ower, an' I wad be back intil my ilka-day's claes the morn.

Durie gied me a shog whan to stan' up; an' the neebours tell't Jess that I lookit raal snod, an' boo'd at the richt bit, an' did fine. But I didna gaiter my feet or aince it was a' by, an' we got into the session-hoose, whaur I wrote doun my name in a muckle buik, an' syne got a grup o' the han' frae the meenister an' the ither elders. It gied me a kind o' queer feelin to find mysel cheek by chow wi' Durie an' Liddell, after a' that had come an' gaen; I couldna help thinkin I was amang them somethin like a rotten in a cawie. But they were baith unco ceevil, I maun say; an' Archie Howden took me awa wi' him

to his hoose, an' gied me a dram. I was nane
the waur o't, I can tell ye, for it's nae joke bein
made an elder. An' eh, if I had kent a' that it
was to cost me! But its mebbe juist as weel
that we dinna aye see what's afore us.


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VI

ARCHIE HOWDEN ON HOME RULE

AFTER this things keepit unco quiet in the pairish for a gey while. Aince I had gotten ower the novelty o't, I likit fine being an elder; there's nae dou't ye're mair lookit up to, an' your word carries mair wecht, whan ye're on the session; an' if the poseetion has its drawbacks, whaur wull ye find ane that's withoot them? There's aye a somethin, as the wife said to her dochter whan she cam wheengin aboot her drucken man.

I'll no' say my heart gaed the same gait as my legs whan I passed by Jenny's door on a Saiturday nicht, an' saw the windies a' lichted up, wi' their red blinds, sae bricht an' couthie like; an' I kent, if I keekit in, I wad see An'ra Wabster, an' Tam Arnott, an' Adam Instant, an' a heap mair o' my auld cronies, a' sittin roun', haein their frien'ly gless an' passin their remarks on a'boday an' a'thing. Whiles ane o' them wad speer at me if I wasna comin in, for they were missin me sair. But I wasna gaun back on my word to An'ra Wabster. A fine hair in my neck



it wad ha' been to him, gin I had speeled doun at the first biddin after settin mysel sae hie abüne him!

What wi' bein bainished frae the auld houff, an' no' haein An'ra to crack wi'—it was nae mair nor fair guid-day an' fair guid-e'en atween us for a gey while, after him bein sae ill-natur'd about the eldership—I fell into the way o' passin an hoor or twa gey aften wi' Archie Howden. It kind o' brocht us thegither, him an' me bein baith on the session, an' haein the affairs o' the kirk to converse aboot.

Archie was a bien body, an' keepit a guid, ouch hoose, an' he was aye glad to see me; an' whiles, on a fine nicht wi' a müne, he wad yoke the ould powny in his spring-cairt, an' come awa up to Cauldshiel an' gie us a ca'. The wife was aye raal prood to see him, an' whan I wad say, "Hae a bit tastin o' the Auld Kirk, Archie?" an' Archie wad say, "Weel, Jims, I no' think it wad dae either you or me ony hairm," she was ready enouch to get the bottle an' the glesses oot o' the press, no' like the way she had wi' ither veesitors, or wi' mysel whan I socht a dram at an orra time.

Archie was auld by me, but a hale carle yit; he had no' been sair wrocht, ye could see. He was a wricht to his trade, but them wha had kent him a' his days said that he had ne'er stressed himsel wi' wark; he was ane o' the

kind that are better wi' the rake nor wi' the shool, as the saying is. Ye micht find him ony day stan'in at his shop door or pappin aboot his yaird, wi' a fit-rule in his han', an' his sark-sleeves rowed up; but I never heard tell o' onybody that had seen him ca' in a nail. He left that pairt o' the business to his son, young Archie—no' that he was verra young, but that was the name he gaed by; an' aboot a' that he ever set han' to himsel was the undertakin.

He üsed to brag that he did a' the kistin for three pairishes, an' there's nae dou't he was a gran' han' at it. Whan there was a death, as süne as the corp was streekit, they gaed straucht awa for Archie Howden; he had ways o' daein that pleased the folk uncommon, an' he could pit up a prayer at the kistin as weel as ony minister. "I kisted the auld laird," he üsed to say, "in the year forty-twa; first we put him in leid, an' syne we put him in aik; it was a bonny job—it took four-an'-twenty men wi' han'-spaiks to lift him doun the avenue. An' I hae kisted a' the paupers wha hae dee'd in the pairish, to the orders o' the Buird. But it didna maitter whether the kist was aik or deal, an' whether it had bress munts or nane ava, I hae aye ettled to dae my best for the corp, an to show respec' for the feelins o' the frien's."

He was a keen politeecian, Archie, an' a maist notor'ous reader o' the papers. I dinna ken hoo

mony he read in the week, o' a' sorts an' sizes. He had ae son in Ameriky, an' anither in Lunnon, an' a brither in Australly, an' a dochter mairrit at the Cape, an' a wheen mair frien's ithair airts, an' he got papers frae them a', forby what he bocht or borrowed for himsel. He appeared to tak in what he read, an' minded a heap o't. He could tell ye a' aboot the Parliament, an' whae was in this office an' whae was in that, an' hoo muckle o' the public siller they pooched for juist sittin in their chairs an' writin their names; an' he gaed through a' their speeches an' havers, an' leuch an' rubbit his han's whan they ca'd ane anither leears, an' cheat-the-wuddies, an' muckle füles, an' a' mainner o' ill names. He was a nacky body, an' braw company, aince ye got him fairly started.

He had juist ae faut—a gey bad ane, I maun alloo: he was a maist tremenjis Tory. What had made him ane I never richtly understüde, an' I'm no' suir he understüde himsel. He didna get it frae his faither, for auld Hughie, wha lived to be ower ninety, was a soun' Leeberal; nor yet frae his mither, for she was a dochter o' Sandie Gair the soutar in Gurlyneuk, wha had been a Chartist in his day. Some folk wad hae't that Archie turned Tory after he got the kistin o' the auld laird; an' ithers said it was wi' readin ower mony papers.

Of coorse I didna gae in wi' his opeenions, but

I maun say he tell't me a heap o' things I no' kent afore, for he was like the fule in the Buik o' Proverbs—his een were in the ends o' the yirth; an', no' to be a man o' yeddication, the way he rappit aff a' thae lang-nebbit names o' faur-away places an' frem folk wadna ha' shamed the dominie himsel. He kent what gait the Rooshians were like to be daein us hairm, an' hoo we wad hae the French on oor han's at the same time, an' fechtin gaun on ower the haill warld. "Whaur wull ye be than," says he, "wi' your Leeberal Government? A' thae muckle airn ships rammin ane anither or ens blawn up wi' torpedies—no' a frien' to lippen to, an' the Irish han'-for-nieve wi' oor enemies, an' oor ports a' blockaded, an' no' a bushel o' wheat comin in frae Ameriky? Whaur's your flour breid to come frae? Hoo lang div ye think it wull tak for oor thretty millions o' folk a' to dee o' stairvation?" I likit weel to hear him prophe-seein the ruin o' the kintra; he reeled it aff like a prentit buik.

To hear him, the Tories had aye been the best frien's o' the workin man, an' the Leeberals had ne'er düne onythin but promise fair to win in, an' syne mak a hash o' the national business. "Ye hae a Leeberal Government in the noo," says he, "an' ye think it's gaun to rain kail, an' ye're a' oot wi' your cogies, haudin them up to kep the draps—puir fülsh craturs!"

"It was the Leeberals gied us oor vote, ony-way," says I.

"Gied ye your vote!" says he; "ay, nae dou't they gied ye your vote, an' syne ye gied it to them, an' muckle guid it has dūne ye! Ye've been thirled to them a gey while noo, an' what the better are ye for't? Nae dou't ye hae gotten a vote for the Parliament, an' anither for the Schule Buird, an' noo ye're gaun to get anither yit for a Pairish Cooncil—ou, ay; gin votes wad dae't, ye'd ha' been set up in the warld lang syne. Ye're a man o' sense, Jims, for a' ye're a Leeberal. Answer me that: Wull his votes fill the wame o' the workin man in the time o' faim-ine an' war? Wull they keep a roof ower his heid an' pit duds on his weans? They say, bile jadstanes in butter, the bree'll be guid; but what wull ye bile your votes in, I wad like to ken, whan the ships canna win ower frae the tither side, an' the wheaten laif brings its wecht in gowd?"

"Houts man, Archie," says I, "ye're rinnin awa wi' the harrows noo. Ye're feared for the day ye never saw. I'm no' gaun to tak doun a' that stuff that ye get oot o' your Tory papers. I'm ower auld-farrant to be fleyed for wirry cows."

"Mebbe ye are," says he, "I'll no' say. But I wad hae mair respec' for your opeenion on the politics, Jims, gin ye could tell me o' ony mortal

guid that ever cam to ye frae your vote that ye're sae prood o'. That's ae thing aboot your Leebereal Government that I canna awa wi'; they're aye fangin the well—giein votes here, an' votes there—but foul a drap o' watter e'er comes oot o't. Ye've got the franchisee gey low noo," says he; "I'm thinking daft folk an' paupers wull be settin up a cry for't neist. Weel, weel; füles shouldna hae chappin-sticks, an' there's a gey wheen o' them that has votes wad be better wantin them, for the credit o' the kintra."

Whiles we got on the subjec' o' Home Rule. "Ye'll be a Home Ruler, Jims, I'm thinkin?" he wad say to me.

"Weel," says I, "ye ken I hae aye voted for Tod-Lowrie, an' he's ane, or ca's himsel ane, onyway."

"An' what for, noo, wad ye gie thae Irish a Parliament o' their ain?" says he; "d'ye no' think they're weel eneuch aff as they are, an' aiblins a hantle better nor they deserve?"

"I'll no' say," says I.

"Look here," says he; "what 'll come ower your ain maister, up here at Cauldshiel, aince his tack's oot?"

"He'll be roupit," says I.

"An' div ye ken what wad happen til him," says he, "gin he had the luck to be an Irish fairmer insteid o' a Scots ane? A' the rent that

he's ahint wi' wad be wipit clean aff the slate, an' he wad get the len' o' siller oot o' the public funds to buy his fairm; nae maitter whether the laird wanted to sell't or no', he wad juist hae to dae't; an' syne Britherston wad be laird himsel, insteid o' haein to stan' the shirra, puir body."

"D'ye tell me?" says I.

"Ay, I tell ye," says he, "an' I'll tell ye something mair, tae. Hoo muckle div ye think I hae to pay in taxes for my spring-cairt? Ane an' twenty shillins in the year. Noo, gin I was in Ireland, hoo muckle d'ye think I wad hae to pay? Juist fifteen shillins."

"D'ye tell me?" says I.

"Ay," says he, "an' I'll tell ye mair. Hoo muckle div ye pay in taxes for that wee doug o' yours?"—a bit messan we'd had aboot the hoose for a gey while, that the wife made unco wark wi'.

"Seven an' saxpence in the year," says I; "no' that she's warth it, the useless beast."

"Weel," says he, "gin ye were in Ireland ye wad hae to pay juist half a croon for't—no' a bawbee mair. An' yet ye wad gie thae spil't bairns o' Irish a Parliament o' their ain! Man, Jims, I wonder at ye!"

"I hae nae parteec'lar likin for the Irish," says I; "they're unco guid at beckin an' been-gin, an' that gangs doun wi' some maisters; awfu' fair to your face, but mebbe the wark's

no' sae weel düne after a' as oor ain folk wad dae't, though we haena siccan a smooth tongue or sae muckle to say wi't."

"Ay, I ken them," says he; "rub your heid wi' an ily stick, an' cut your throat ahint your back."

"But here's the way I look at it," says I; "they've been yatterin an' craikin for Guid kens hoo lang to hae this Parliament o' theirs, an' Tod-Lowrie says we'll hae nae peace or aince they get it, an' nae chance o' onythin bein düne for oorsels. An' ye ken we hae faur ower mony o' them here already, an' ay mair comin in, keepin doun wages, an' shovin better men oot o' a job. They mind me o' thae insec's the meen-ister was readin oot about the tither Sunday—thae locus' beas' that cam up in a mighty swarm, so that the face o' the sky was darkened wi' them, an' herried the haill land o' Israel. Noo, the way I look at it is, gin they had a Parliament o' their ain they wad bide at hame, an' mebbe a wheen o' them that's here the noo nicht gang back to their ain kintra, an' a guid riddance."

"An' what gars ye think that, Jims?" says he.

"Weel," says I, "Tod-Lowrie says that their Parliament wad start a' kind o' mills an' factories, an' syne there wad be plenty o' wark for the cratur, an' they wadna need to come ower here, sornin on honest Scots folk."

"An' did Tod-Lowrie tell ye hoo they were gaun to drive their mills an' their factories?" says he; "ye ken there's nae coal in Ireland."

"Nae coal? Are ye suir o' that?" says I.

"No' eneuch to bile a parritch-pat in the haill kintra," says he.

"Weel," says I, "but they maun hae some kind o' stuff to ken'le a fire wi'. They'll hae nae lack o' peat, onyway, for they tell me it's maist a' bog-land ower there."

"Peat?" says he. "Muckle guid that wull dae for their mills an' factories! You try feedin the injine o' your threshin-mill up here wi' peat, an' see what speed ye come."

"But they hae watters," says I; "watter-poo'r does fine for ca'in machinery, an' it's a hantle cheaper nor coal, forby."

"Ay, they hae watters," says he; "but they're no' like oor burns here, that come loupin an' bickerin doun frae the hills, an' nae mair a-dae nor big a bit dam, an' carry a lade ony gait ye want it. The watters ower there are mair like ditches or canawls; there's nae fa' in them. A' the watter-poo'r in Ireland wadna grind a peck o' aits. I dinna see hoo your mills an' factories are to be set a-gaun, Jims, unless mebbe ye could mak üse o' the tides, an' ca' them wi' electreecity. I was readin a lang screed aboot that in ane o' the papers the tither day."

"Ye'll be tellin me neist there's nae tides in Ireland," says I.

"Na, na, I'm tellin ye nae lees, believe me or no'," says he; "an' as for the Irish bidin at hame, gin they had a Parliament o' their ain, juist think for yoursel for aince—exerceese your ain jidgment—hoo wad it be? They make no' sic bad servants, the Irish, but a'body that kens them kens they're no' fit to be maisters; an' gin ye set them up to rule theirsels, they wad be fechtin like deevils wi' ane anither, pu'in a' ways at aince, an' drivin capital oot o' the kintra; an' syne they wad come croodin ower waur nor in forty-sax—an' a black year that was for puir auld Scotland. Gie them their ploy, if ye wull; but dinna complain if ye're keepit hingin aboot a ge y while on the causey at the feein market. . . . An' noo ye hae a wheen questions to pit to Tod-Lowrie the neist time he comes palauverin roun here. He'd be nane the waur o' a bit hecklin on thae pints, I'm thinkin."

VII

A VILLAGE CASSANDRA

ARCHIE had a maist awfu' ill-will to Tod-Lowrie, oor coonty member. "A braw speaker, ye tell me?" he wad say. "Nae dou't; speakin's his trade. Gin a la'yer hasna the gift o' the gab, he's no' worth ca'in oot o' a kail-yaird. But what for ye send a la'yer body to represent ye in the Parliament—a Lunnon la'yer, a man wha disna ken the trams o' a cairt frae the back-buird, or dockens frae curly greens—that's what passes my comprehension. What 'n nonsense was yon he was blawin ye up wi' the last time he gaed roun', giein ye a glint o' his sonsy face an' castin stour in your een—yon aboot settin up a' the pleuchmen in bits o' fairms o' their ain?"

"It wasna nonsense," says I, gey near lossin my temper wi' him, for he was aye nag, naggin at me aboot Tod-Lowrie, the man wha had got my vote sin' ever I had ane to gie—"it wasna nonsense. He tell't us we had been lang eneuch hadden an' dung, livin on doug's wages, an' warkin the land for the guid o' ither folk. He said it was a black, burnin shame to think that the

pleuchman should be makin day an' way o't an' nae mair a' his life, an no' hae as muckle as a coo's gress to ca' his ain at the end o't. That was what he said, an' if that's what ye ca' nonsense, Archie, I'll juist hae to tell ye to your face that ye're nae better nor an auld stick in the mud o' a Tory."

"That's a' verra weel," says he, "but fine words winna fill the firloot. Whaur's the land to come frae that ye're to get for your sma' fairms?"

"Frae them that has 't the noo," says I; "the lairds hae had it a' their ain way lang eneuch; they'll be nane the waur o' haein their horns cowed. Tod-Lowrie says thir's kittle times for property in land, an' gin the lairds could see an inch afore their nose they wad be glad to cry haavers, rather than tine a'."

"Has Tod-Lowrie ony property in land o' his ain," says he, "forby the bit midden-steid that gies him a vote in his ain coonty?"

"No' that I ever heard tell o'," says I.

"I was thinkin that," says he; "ay, he's a braw han' at cuttin muckle whangs oot o' ither folk's leather. Ye've heard the auld sayin, Jims: they are free wi' their horse that has nane. But grantin ye had the fairm, whaur's the siller to come frae to stock it? Did Tod-Lowrie tell ye that? Whae's to pay for biggin ye a hoose an' a byre, an' fencin, an' a' the like o' that? an'

hoo are ye to come by horse an' graith for the pleuchin? Nae dou't ye hae somethin to the fore, for if ye hae wrocht sair the mistress here has guidit weel; but hae ye eneuch? Ye canna bring but what's no' ben; an' gin ye wad learn the aftercome o' startin in a fairm wi' ower sma' means, or on borrowed siller, speer at your ain maister, auld Britherston; he can tell ye."

"Ou, that's a' richt," says I; "Tod-Lowrie says that we're to get the len' o' the siller for plenishin, an' as lang as we like to pay 't back. An' as for the horse an' pleuch, he says we wull get the len' o' them tae; it wull be a new trade, hirin oot a' thae things as they're wanted, an' ae pair o' horse nicht sair half a dizzen o' sma' fairms."

"An' Tod-Lowrie tell't ye that," says he, "an' ye trowed it! Aweel, he that lippens to borrowed pleuchs, his land lies lea; an' sae ye wad find or a' was düne. It beats me a'thegither hoo a' ye dacent, honest chiels, an' no' wantin in gumption, neither, canna see through that sneck-drawer o' a Lunnon la'yer. Man, it's your votes he wants, an' for onythin else he cares na a bress farthin. Ye're juist haudin the ladder for him to speel up by, that's a'. Ye gie him the richt to pit M.P. after his thief-like name, an' that's worth mebbe twa thoosand in the year til him, forby his chance o' a place an' a pension. Ye're juist like a wheen bairns stan'in afore the sweety-

man's windy lickin your mou's, an' Tod-Lowrie sayin til ye, 'Bide a wee, hinnies, an' ye'll get a' thae bonny -dies for naethin; gie me your votes, my bonny lambs, an' ye'll get a chippy-burdie to play yoursels wi' some day!' Ay, he's a raal la'yer, an' nae 'prentice at his trade, neither. He'll keep the tatty, an' gie you the peelin's."

"Ye hae nae richt to say that," says I; "Tod-Lowrie's a gran' man, an' a guid Leeberal; he's aye voted straucht for a' reforms."

"He's like the lave o' them," says he, "neither better nor waur nor ither la'yers; he'll wag as the buss wags."

"He got oor wages up," says I.

"No' a bit o' him," says he; "it was juist the law o' supply an' demand did that. Tod-Lowrie had nae mair a-dae wi't nor the man in the müne."

"An' he pits the workin man in his richt place," says I, "an' that's bünemost. He says the days o' preevilege are gaen by, an' a Tory noo-a-days is juist a kind o' curiosity, an' should be keepit in a museum. He says the classes—that's the Tories—are a' on the tae side, an' the masses—that's hiz—a' on the tither, an' if ye wad find poleetical intelligence, an' richt views, an' soond jidgment, it's amang the masses ye hae got to seek for 't. He tell't us, the last time he gaed roun', that the Hoose o' Lords was juist

the draff of the kintra—a wheen auld wives, an' lunies, an' wastrels, sittin in their gilded chawmer, like clockin hens on cheeny eggs, no' able to hatch onythin theirsels, an' pitin a stop to a' reforms. He said he wadna gie a pinch o' snuff for the opeenion o' a' the honourables an' richt honourables amang them, alangside that o' ae hard-heidit, horny-handit pleuchman. He said the raal nobeelity noo was the nobeelity o' labour, an' ye should ha' heard the ruff he got for sayin 't—man, it was gran'!"

"Ay," says he, "I ken the stuff by the swatch. That's the way he cuittles ye aff an' flings the glaiks in your een. Weel, sowens gae glibly ower, but I'm no' suir they're verra hailsome farin, for a' that. An' the way he splairges ye wi' butter—layin 't on in clauts an' harles, an' lauchin in til himsel a' the time—to my mind, it wad gar a soo scunner."

"Ye seem to ken Tod-Lowrie extraordinar weel," says I.

"Ken him?" says he. "Ay, as weel as if I'd gaen through him with a lichted candle! . . . But look here, Jims," he says, after a bit, "you an' me wull never 'gree aboot Tod-Lowrie, an' we maunna cast oot; it wadna dae for twa elders o' the kirk to be fechtin aboot the politics. I'm an auld man, an' maun hae my say; a toothless doug's fain to gurr, ye ken. Ye maunna tak it ill oot, onythin I hae said; it's a' meant

for your guid, Jims. I'm no' wantin to offend ye."

"Nae offence," says I; "I'm no' that saft-skinned. Ye may jaun'er on as lang as ye like for me; it juist gaes in at the tae lug an' oot at the tither."

"That's a kind o' peety, tae," says he; "if ye kent mair aboot Tod-Lowrie, ye wad mebbe think less o' him; he'll be takin on han' to pu' doun oor kirk, ane o' thae days."

"Pu' doun the kirk?" says I. "What for wad he dae that? What's put that in your heid, Archie? The kirk's daein naebody ony hairm, an' the Leeberals hae aye said that as lang as we didna seek disestaiblishment oorsels, they wadna méll wi't."

"That's a' verra true," says he, "but—"

"But naebody wants the kirk awa," says I, "if it's no' the Frees; an' a'body kens what way they hae gotten sic an ill-will til't—they thocht, whan they gaed oot in forty-three, that it wad come to a deid stop wantin them, an' insteid o' that it's grown an' prospered ilka day since. Did ye ever hear tell what the mistress here said to her Auntie Bell—ye ken, Geordie Runciman, the deacon's wife—ae day she was braggin an' bleezin awa aboot their Free Kirk? 'A' the cream gaed oot at the Disruption,' says Geordie's wife. 'An' mighty puir butter ye hae kirned wi't,' says Jess. Gey guid, was't no'?"

“Maist awfu’ guid,” says he, “but—”

“Ye needna tell me,” says I; “if it was the Hoose o’ Lords, I wadna say—but the kirk! Na, na; ye’re dreamin, Archie.”

“So ye think,” says he, “but tak note o’ what I’m tellin ye: Tod-Lowrie has nae guid-will to the Auld Kirk, an’ the Frees are aye eggin him on, an’ he thinks he has your votes safe in his pooch, dae as he wull; an’ I’ll wad ye onythin yel ike to name—if I turn oot wrang, Jims, I’ll kist ye for naethin—he’ll be lettin lowse the haill pack against the kirk afore ye ken whaur ye are. It may come in an hoor that winna come in seeven year.”

“Hout awa wi’ ye, Archie,” says I, “that’s anither o’ your molligrants, like yon aboot the folk a’ deein o’ hunger for want o’ flour breid. Time eneuch to skreigh whan ye’re strucken. What for wad Tod-Lowrie set himsel against the kirk, whan the tae-half o’ his supporters belang til’t? He wad be takin a stick to break his ain back. Na, na—that’s juist ane o’ the cries your Tory pairty’s aye gettin up, to wyle awa a wheen voters frae the tither side. I ken better; the kirk’s no’ in ony danger.”

“I wush ye may be richt, Jims,” says he, “but I raither dou’t it. Tod-Lowrie’s gey ill to grup; he’s never faur awa frae his hidie-hole. But if he’s no’ shairpenin his gully against the kirk the noo, I’m cheated. He’s gaun mairchin roun’ the

walls o' oor naitional Zion, but I'm hopin they'll
no' tummle doun at the first squeak o' *his* penny
whustle," says he; an' wi' that he said guid-nicht,
an' gaed awa hame.


VIII

THE POLITICAL FAITH OF AN'RA WABSTER

It turned oot that Archie was richt, after a', an' I was wrang, aboot Tod-Lowrie an' the kirk. The first I heard o't was ae day we had been to the hills for coals. There was a half-way hoose at Gammelston, keepit by a man ca'd Sam'el Vint, whaur the chaps üsed to stop in the hame-comin an' melt their maggs; an', no' bein in oor ain pairish, I didna objec' to gae in wi' them an' hae some refreshment. An'ra Wabster was there, an' Wullie Herkis, an' Dave Da'gleish, an' mysel; an' after we'd been sittin crackin for a bit, An'ra he pu's a newspaper oot o' his pooch an' raxes it ower to me. "Hae, elder," says he, pintin oot a place wi' his thoom, "cast your een ower that, an' let's hear what ye think o't. But I daur say it wull be piper's news to you; ye're at the lug o' the law noo, an' nae dou't ye'll ha' heard a' aboot it or syne."

Whan I read the thing ower—a gey lang screed it was—I'll no' say but it gied me a gliff. It was heidit, "Mr. Tod-Lowrie, Q.C., M.P., on Scottish Disestaiblishment"; an' appeared to be

some speech he had been makin, no' onywhere near han', but some gait gey faur sooth. I no' mind a' he said, but it cam to this, that established kirks were no' the fashion in thir demmycratic days, an' it wasna fair o' the state to be favourin ae sec' at the expense o' its neebours. The Leeberal pairty wasna like the Tory ane, for a' the Leeberals thocht o' was principle, an' a' the Tories cared for was place an' poo'r. The Leeberal pairty never put its han' to the pleuch an' syne drew back; they mairched on abriest o' the times, an' whiles aheid o' them; no' like the Tories, whae were aye taiglin ahint. They had made a beginnin wi' the Irish kirk, an' they wadna rest or aince the ither twa were doun tae. Oor ane wad be the neist to gang, for the folk in Scotland didna care an auld sang for their kirk, an' wadna crook a finger to keep it up; no' mony o' them belanged til't, an' them that did were maistly Tories; the pairish meenisters were little better nor election agents for the Tory pairty, an' a mighty puir show they made o't, as onybody might see by castin up hoo mony Tory members cam frae a' Scotland. There was to be nae simmerin an' winterin wi' this question, for the Leeberals were pledged to the gran' principle o' releegious equality, an' the süner they took the job on han' an' ca'd through wi't, the better pleased the folk in Scotland wad be. That was the soum o' what he said.



I could scarce trow my ain een, an' I bùde to read it twice ower to mak suir.

"Weel," says An'ra, whan I gied him back the paper, "what's your opeenion o' that, Jims?"

"My opeenion is," says I, "that Tod-Lowrie hasna been richt reported. It wad ha' been better gin he had said a' that on his ain side o' the border. Thae soothron bodies maun hae taen him doun wrang."

"What gars ye think that?" says he; "is't no' true, a' that he says?"

"No," says I, "it's no' a' true. It's no' true that the meenister's a Tory agent; there's no' ane o' ye ever heard him say politics a' the time he's been in Snawdon pairish. An' it's no' true that the maist feck o' the folk dinna gang to the pairish kirk, for a'body kens better; the Frees are aye lossin members an' we're gettin them. An' it's no' true that Auld Kirk folk are maist a' Tories. Is Wullie here a Tory, or Dave, or yoursel? Wad ye ca' me a Tory—me, that has been a Leeberal since I was a lad-die at the schule, an' that's voted Leeberal sin' ever I had a vote?"

"An' what aboot your session?" says he; "what aboot Durie, an' Liddell, an' that glaberin auld fùle Archie Howden that ye're sae chief wi'? An' as for yoursel, Jims, I'm no' sae suir o' ye as I aince was, afore they took an' made an elder o' ye. Ye've been in an ill nest,

an' it's queer to me if ye haena caught some o' the Toryism aff them; it's gey smittle, ye ken. They tell me Archie Howden's gaun about a' gaits braggin he's convertit ye."

"That's a dounricht lee," says I.

"Man, An'ra," says Wullie Herkis, "can ye no' haud your tongue about Jims bein made an elder? We're a' stawed hearin o't. For ony favour, let that runt stick in the grund, an' gie us somethin else for a chainge."

"Weel," says he, "I'll no' say ony mair about it. But let's hear your opeenion, Jims, supposin Tod-Lowrie said yon that's prentit in the paper. Hoo wad it gang, think ye, gin he ettled to pu' doun the kirk?"

"Hoo wad it gang?" says I. "It wad be an ill day for Tod-Lowrie whan he ettled to dae onythin o' the sort. He micht as weel pack up his pockmanty an' tak the road sooth, for he wad dae nae mair guid here. He wad find he had the wrang soo by the lug, an' that afore verra lang. Wha wants the Auld Kirk pu'd doun? Answer me that?"

"Naebody that I ken o'," says Wullie Herkis, "if it's no' the Frees."

"Ay, the Frees," says I; "an' what way div they want it doun? It's because oor kirk's like Awron's rod that turned into a muckle serpent, as we're tell't in the Buik o' Exodus, an' whan the warlock bodies cuist doun their staves an'

they turned into serpents tae, Awron's ane stüde up on its hint legs an' devoored them a', an' left naethin but their tails. That's hoo it's like to be wi' the Frees; they're in the deid-thraw, or gey near han' it; an' fine they ken that gin they canna get oor thrapple cut, we'll hae them gauped up, stoop an' roop."

"That's weel said," says Wullie Herkis; "man, Jims, it's an unco gift ye hae, o' layin the hied o' the soo to the tail o' the grice. For my pairt, I canna mak oot the Frees ava. The kirk's nane o' their biggin; an' if they liked to gae oot, an' we like to bide in, what for should they want to pu' doun the bawks on oor heids? That's what I wad like to ken."

"Ye may weel ask that," says I.

"As for hoo it wad gang," says he, "I hae aye voted for Tod-Lowrie; but gin he jines in wi' them that wad tak awa oor kirk frae us, I'm düne wi' him. He'll get nae mair votes frae me."

"Nor frae me neither," says Dave Da'gleish. "I'll ne'er vote for ony man wha wad hairm the kirk o' oor faithers. There's naethin in the hail service I like better nor yon prayer the meenister aye gies us: Bless the Kirk o' Scotland; let nae-body say, Pu' doun her battlements, for they are no' the Lord's; let nae weepoon formed against her ever prosper; let peace be within her wa's an' prosperity within her palaces. I wad gang

to the kirk if it was for naethin mair nor juist to hear yon bonny prayer."

"Ye hear that, An'ra?" says I til him; "it's kittle shootin at corbies an' clergy, as my auld faither, honest man, used to say; an' I'm thinkin Tod-Lowrie wull fin' that oot for himsel, gin he steers up ony sic hurry-burry, an' gets a' the meenisters doun on the tap o' him."

"The meenisters?" says An'ra. "Muckle Tod-Lowrie heeds for the meenisters! Let them mind their ain trade, an' that's no' the politics; that's no' what they draw their steeppen's for. Gin they did mair wark theirsels, an' meddled less wi' ither folk's, it wad be tellin them."

"Look here, An'ra Wabster," says I, "I'm no' gaun to sit still an' hear ye misca' the meenisters. Hae ye ony faut to fin' wi' oor ain? Wull ye daur to say that *he* neglec's his wark, either in the pu'pit or oot o't?"

"I hae naethin to say against Broun," says he, "forby that he's ower frien'ly wi' the laird to be a richt frien' o' the workin man. He's no' ane o' the warst o' them, but he's weel paid for a' he does. If the haill kit o' them was turned oot to gress thegither, I'm thinkin we wadna loss muckle. There's mair ways o' layin oot siller nor on keepin up kirks an' meenisters."

"Man, An'ra," says I, "that's a heathen-like way o' speakin, an' I'm laith to think ye mean what ye say. Div ye heed sae little for the

Auld Kirk that kirsened ye, an' mairrit ye, an' has preached the Gospel to ye a' your days that ye wadna care though thae enemies o' a' releegion got their way an' disestaiblished her the morn?"

"It wadna cost me a hoast," says he; "your kirk's no like your kail: ye can dae wantin't. Mind ye, I hae nae ill-will to the Auld Kirk; faur frae't. But I'm no' ane o' the kind that pits the kirk first, that's a'."

"An' what div ye pit first," says I, "gin a body may speer at ye?"

"Mysel," says he; "ay, that's the trüth—an' ye needna sit there, Jims, blinkin like an air-up hoolet. You for a politeecian! Man, div ye no' ken what's the beginnin an' end o' the politics? Grup a' ye can, an' haud on by what ye've gruppit! I'm nae waur nor my neebours, but mebbe juist a wee thing mair ootspoken. I dinna ken hoo it may be wi' you, bein an elder, but I'll wad ye what ye like, gin Tod-Lowrie comes doun an' lays the maitter afore us in a' its bearins, he'll get Wullie here, an' Dave, to gie him their votes, kirk or nae kirk."

"Deil a fear o' him," says I; "man, An'ra, ye shape a'body's shoon by your ain shauchled feet. Wad ye vote for ony man that gangs against the kirk, Wullie Herkis?"

"No' me," says Wullie.

"Or you, Dave Da'gleish?"

"No' me," says Dave.

"Ye hear that, An'ra?" says I.

"Ay, I hear," says he; "but I'll wait or aince I see. An' noo I'm thinkin we'll hae to be gaun, for we've left thae beas' stan'in ootby lang eneuch. Tak aff your dram, elder, and dinna look sae hangit-like; the lift winna fa', though the kirk may!"

IX

MR. TOD-LOWRIE, Q.C., M.P.

It wasna verra lang after this or Tod-Lowrie cam roun', haudin meetins up an' doun the coonty; an' a heap o' the folk gaed to hear him, for it had gotten aboot that he was gaun to gie his reasons for pu'in down the kirk. Ye never saw Tod-Lowrie?—no, he was afore your time. Weel, he was a muckle-boukit chiel, wi' chuffie cheeks an' a roun' gawsy face, like a Selkirk bannie or a hairst mune; ower sleekit-lookin for some folk's taste, but we had nae faut to find wi' him; we thocht an awfu' heap o' him than.

Naebody could say, no' his worst enemy, that Tod-Lowrie wasna clever: he was as gleg as a razor, an' as ill to grup as a flae. He was a fine speaker, forby. Ye wadna ha' guessed he was Scots by his tongue; but for a' his knappit English an' his queer kind o' sing-sang way o' speakin, no' like onybody else I ever heard, I likit weel to listen til him. Folk said that was the way they learned them to speak at some o' their English colleges, but as to that I canna say. Naethin ever angered him or put him oot; ye

never saw him loss his temper; an' he had a way o' speakin aboot them that differed frae him as if they were wee bairns at the schule, or puir feckless craturs frae the Coonty 'Sylum, that üsed to gar them sweir maist dreidfu', an' say they wad tak saxty days wi' plesure juist to give him ane ower the cantle wi' a palin' stab.

Ye nicht be suir if Tod-Lowrie took up ony question that there was somethin to be made oot o't. The Tories üsed to say that he was nae better nor a greedy gled o' a la'yer, wha wad hire himsel to Auld Nick for a fee; an' that he had nae honour or principle in him, an' didna ken what trüth meant; if a lee could ha' worried him, he'd ha' been chokit lang syne. Of coorse, he wasna as bad as that; but I maun alloo—no' that I wad ha' said it to Archie Howden—that Tod-Lowrie was worth watchin. There's nae dou't he kent his groats in ither folk's kail; he wasna the kind to sell his hen on a rainy day; an' if he keepit ae ee on the guid o' the workin classes, he keepit the ither gey steedy on his ain. We a' understüde that he büde to fecht for his ain han'; he hadna been born wi' a siller spüne in his mooth, as he aften tell't us, an' had nae influence at his back to shove him on; he was a plain, hard-workin man, juist like ony o' oorsels. But we ne'er had ony reason to dou't that he was a soond Radical; an' gin he sair'd himsel at

the same time he sair'd hiz, whaur was the hairm? I'm suir nane o' us grudged him ony bit pickins he got wi' bein oor coonty member. An' no' haein ony land o' his ain, he was the mair free to gae in for fair dealin whan land reform, an' sma' holdins, an sic like questions, cam up in the Parliament.

Weel, whan Tod-Lowrie cam oor way, I made a pint o' gaun to his meetin. Pate Peffers o' Scraemuir was in the chair, an he had the haill platform to himsel, for the gentry and the tither fairmers roun' aboot were a' on the wrang side o' the politics. Afore the meeting began, Pringle the writer, Tod-Lowrie's agent, cam awa ower to whaur I was sittin, an' askit me to second the vote o' confidence in the honourable member. But I said, if it was a' the same to him, I wad raither no'; an' whan he askit me what way, I juist tell't him, straucht oot, that I was an elder o' the kirk noo, an' I wad hae to be satisfied that the honourable member meant nae ill to the kirk afore he got ony support frae me. Wi' that Pringle gaed awa back to Tod-Lowrie, an' the twa o' them killogued thegither for a bit; an' syne he gaed ower to An'ra Wabster, an' got him to tak the job an han', there bein nae need o' ony speech, nae mair nor to say, "I second that."

I wush I could gie ye a notion o' what Tod-Lowrie's speech was like. But it's no' possible;

ye haena heard him for yoursel, an' ye canna understan' the way he had o' takin a subjec', an' pitin 't afore ye in the verra licht ye had never thocht o'. It was like takin a pair o' auld breeks, an' turnin them inside oot, an' provin til ye that ye had been wearin the best o' them neist your skin, oot o' sicht, an' a' the time kennin naethin aboot it.

First he han'led the question o' Home Rule. He said gin the Irish got Home Rule, they wad hae to elec' members to this hoose, an' that hoose, an' the tither hoose; an' they wad be that thrang votin, they wad hae nae time to come ower here, cuttin doun wages, an' takin the bit oot o' oor mooths. An' as for lettin their members bide amang oor ain, an' vote on oor affairs, he said it was juist a case o' giff-gaff, or claw my back an' I'll claw yours; for gin we gied them their bit Parliament that they were sae keen o', they wad gie us ony mortal thing we likit; an' there was sma' chance o' the Tories gettin office, wi' a' the wecht o' saxty Irish votes coup't into the scale against them.


Syne he took up the question o' sma' holdins, an' what he ca'd the naiteral richt o' the tiller o' the sile to hae a share o't for himsel. It wasna that muckle we socht, he said; the laird wad aye hae his braid acres: but Scottish pleuchmen werena like Rooshian serfs or Auffrican nee-

gurs, an' somethin wad hae to be dūne to meet their juist deman's.

An' syne he cam on to the bit I had been waitin for, and mony a ane forby mysel; an' the way he drappit his vice an' rowed his een was sign enouch that he was on gleg ice, an' kent it. There was anither question, he said, that he couldna wind up his speech withoot referrin til—the question o' the kirk. Some folk micht mebbe blame him for steerin up the question, an' no' lettin sleepin dougs lie. But it wasna his blame. It wasna him that had steered it up: it was the speerit o' the age. The Leebereals were a' for progress, baith in kirk an' state; an' it was in the name o' progress, whilk was juist anither name for Leeberalism, that he ca'd upon us to face this question o' the kirk. There were faur ower mony kirks in Scotland for the wants o' the folk; twa men in ilka pairish, an' whiles three, daein the wark that ane micht dae an' no' be ower hard driven; an' whaur was the sense o' that? It was juist a waste baith o' guid men an' guid siller. If the state kirk was dūne awa wi', than a' the Presbyterian bodies wad come thegither; an' in place o' three kirks cuttin ane anither's throats, we wad hae ae Kirk o' Scotland worthy o' the name, an' syne a'body wad dwell in peace an' guid-will.

He had been sair misrepresentit on this question. He kent fine—he had guid reason to ken

—that some staunch frien's o' his ain in the pairish o' Snawdon, no' a hunder mile frae whaur he was stan'in the noo—men wha had stude by him in fair wather an' foul, through guid report an' ill report—lookit upon him noo wi' jealous een, as if he was an enemy o' the kirk. There couldna be a greater mistake. Faur frae bein an enemy o' the kirk, he was its best frien'. Suppose ye took a soond man, hale an' feery o' the feet, an' gar't him aye walk aboot wi' a pair o' crutches, what wad happen til him? Ye wad mak a puir lamiter, a helpless crupple, o' that soond man. That was what state pay was to the Kirk o' Scotland—a pair o' crutches, neither mair nor less. Was he no' the true frien' o' the kirk that wad kick awa the crutches, an' say til her, What needs ye gang hauchlin an' hirplin alang, like crupple Dick upon a stick? Haud up your heid, an' walk on your ain pins! Wad dis-estaiblishment dae ony ill to the kirk? A' that they wad tak awa was juist a name; it wadna mak a preen's pint o' difference. Wad disendowment dae her ony ill? He had mair respec' for her meenisters an' members nor to think sae; for if the Free Kirk an' the U. P. Kirk could pay their ain way, what was to hinder the Estaiblished frae daein the same? Wad ony man in that meetin get up an' tell him that the Auld Kirk couldna haud her ain an' mair withoot gettin an awmus frae the state? Was oor ain meen-



ister (an' he kent fine the respec' his parishioners had for him, an' nae dou't he weel deserved it) no' fit to gaither a congregation an' keep things gaun wantin the teinds? It was a mighty puir compliment the Tories paid the kirk, whan they said that disestaiblishment wad be her destruction. For his pairt he was convinced that it was the verra thing she needed to gie her new life, an' mak her mair o' a poo'r in the land nor she had been sin' the days o' John Knox an' An'ra Melville. But we didna need to mind what the Tories said. They were aye at their auld tricks. A' this hillibaloo they were raisin about the kirk bein in danger was juist anither o' their dodges to cab a wheen Leebereal votes. A laddie wi' a burstit gun nicht frichten the craws for a while, but the craws süne got to ken; an' the Tories had been pintin their rusty auld weepon ower lang, withoot it ever gaun aff, for us to heed muckle about it.

He had been tell't, afore he cam to that meetin, that it wad be better for him to gie this subjec' a wide berth; to steek his mou', an' let the kirk a-be, or he nicht loss votes. He wasna feared that he wad loss mony votes. He didna think that mony o' the stalwart men he saw afore him wad rat frae their pairty, an' gang awa an' vote for a Tory, on ony sic question as this o' the kirk. We a' minded ower weel o' the days whan Toryism had the upper han'—whan this

coonty was nae better nor a Tory game preserve, an' the lairds invitit ane o' theirsels to contest the coonty, juist as they micht ha invitit him to shüte their covers. It wasna likely, after we had been brocht through the wilderness to the verra borders o' the land o' promise, that we wad turn tail an' desert him noo, whan he was wullin an' able to dae faur mair for us nor even he had düne yet, an' gang awa back to the land o' bondage.

But even supposin some o' his frien's michtna see their way to stan' by him ony mair—though it wad be a sair trial to him to loss the support o' a single ane o' the true-hearted intelligent men, whase confidence an' kindness a' thae years had been his proodest possession—even supposin 't, there was ae thing he thocht mair o' nor even the honour o' bein oor representative, an' that was bein true to his principles. Whan a thing cam afore him, he never thocht o' askin himsel hoo it wad pay: he aye askit himsel if it was richt an' juist, an' let that settle 't. It was his firm, honest conviction that a state kirk noo-a-days had nae büsiness to be there—an anchorism, or some sic word, he ca'd it: it wasna jüstice to be taxin folk for the upkeep o' a kirk they didna gang til, an' the Leeberal pairty couldna coontenance ony sic thing. We couldna cry “up wi' the Kirk” an' “doun wi' the Hoose o' Lords” in ae breath, for the tane was a

case o' preevilege juist as muckle as the tither; an' whan the election cam on—an' it was gettin' gey near han'—the main pint for us to keep in mind was this, no' whether the kirk was to stan' or fa', but whether the affairs o' the kintra an' the coorse o' future legislation was to be taen oot the han's o' the pairty that wrocht for the guid o' people an' gaed forrat, an' gien ower to the pairty that wrocht for the guid o' the landlords an' stude still.

Wi' that Tod-Lowrie got a muckle roun' o' applause, an' doun he sat, wipin his fat chafts an' lookin' fine pleased wi' himsel. There was an awfu' stampin' o' feet in the raw ahint me, an' turnin' roun', there I sees Wullie Herkis, an' Dave Da'gleish, an' Adam Instant the dry-dyker, an' Dan Preacher the miller's man, an' a wheen mair o' oor members, kickin' like daft on the fluir, an' seemin'ly in a state o' hie delight wi' a' they had heard. I no' wonder'd muckle at Dave, for he was but a kae-witted cratur at the best, an' aye took his opeenions frae the last speaker; but I maun say I didna expec' it o' Wullie Herkis, wha had some mind o' his ain. An' I couldna help thinkin' to mysel' what a clever, fair-spoken chiel Tod-Lowrie was, an' what a skill he had o' liftin' ye aff your feet an' airtin ye roun' frae north to sooth afore ye kent whaur ye were. For though I wad ha' thocht shame to ruff what he had said aboot the kirk, like Wullie Herkis,

I'll no' deny but he left me in a kind o' swither. I wasna by ony means convinced, but I could see noo that there were twa sides to the question, an' mair ways nor ane o' lookin at them baith; an' the prospec' o' haein to vote for a Tory was mair nor I could thole—the verra thoct o't up-set my stamack.

I wad ha' been weel pleased to hae slippit awa by mysel whan the meetin skail'd withoot haein ony words wi' An'ra Wabster; but he was watchin for me, an' afore I could win oot, he had gruppit me, an' cleekit his airm in mine.

"Weel, elder," says he, "hoo were ye pleased wi' yon?"

"No' awfu' weel," says I.

"I daur say no'," says he; "I'm thinkin it wad be ower stark meat for your wake disjastion. But to my mind, Tod-Lowrie ne'er did better nor he did the nicht. Yon's speaking. Yon's the way to dress the Tories. Ay, there's nae dou't he has a fell tongue in his heid!"

"There's nae dou't o' that," says I.

"He's set the kiin ableeze noo," says he; "he's raised the deil in the pairish, an' nae mistake! The Tories are aye misca'in him for his juokry-pawkry, an' hiddlin ways, but they canna say he didna mak his meanin plain the nicht!"

"Ay, he made it plain eneuch," says I.

"Ye'll hae to mak up your mind, Jims," says

he, "an' that afore verra lang. There's nae dou't ye're in a queer habble. Man, I peety ye."

"Ye may keep your peety or aince ye're askit for't," says I.

"Your kirk chuggin ye the tae road," says he, no' heedin me, "an' your pairty the tither, an' you atween the twa like a hen on a het girdle! Ye see noo it's no' sic ebb pleuchin as ye coont-ed. Ye thocht ye had nae mair a-dae nor speak the word, an' ye wad get Wullie Herkis, an' Dave Da'gleish, an' Robbie Dodds, an' a' the likes o' them, to tak the gait after ye, an' vote for the kirk through thick an' thin."

"I thocht naethin o' the kind," says I.

"Ye did," says he; "ye said as muckle, yon day in Sam'el Vint's at Gammelston. Ye thocht ye had but to loup the dyke yoursel, an' syne a' the lave wad loup after ye. Ye'll find oot your mistake or lang, if ye haena fand it oot already. They'll no' vote Tory, Jims, my man, an' if ye turn blackneb, ye'll dae't your lane."

"We'll see aboot that," says I, no' wantin to gie him 't a' his ain way; "ye haena gotten their votes yet. Süne eneuch to say chuck whan it's oot o' the shell. The kirk's no' doun yet, An'ra, my man. Tod-Lowrie has had his say the night, but the meenister wull hae his the morn."

"The meenister had better mind what he's daein," says he; "we'll hae nae politics in the pu'pit. That may dae wi' Irish folk, but it

winna gae doun here. Gin the meenister tries it on, I'm game to stan' up in the kirk, an' rebuke him afore the haill congregation, as bauld as a lion!"

"Ay, a Lammermuir lion," says I. "The last time ye ettled to stan' up in Snawdon kirk, An'ra, ye didna mak sic a braw job o't. Ye ken the sayin: ilka cock craws crouse on his ain midden-heid. I'm thinkin ye'd better no' interfere wi' the meenister whan he's in the pu'pit, whatever ye may dae whan he's oot o't. I'll back him against Tod-Lowrie himsel, let a-be the likes o' you; an' if ye think he's gaun to haud his tongue, an' lay himsel doun like a bass for the disestaiblishers to dicht their feet on, ye dinna ken your man, that's a'! An' noo I'll awa hame, for it's gettin late; sae guid-nicht to ye." An awa I gaed, no' sweer to get quit o' him, an' be oot o' reach o' his ill-scrapit tongue.

X

MOAB AND THE DOVE

AFTER this there was nae mair peace an' quietness in the pairish. Tod-Lowrie had set the heather a-low, an' it bleezed awa wi' unco little appearance o' burnin itsel oot. The tae side said his speech was juist a leesh o' lees, an' the tither side said it was as true's the Gospel; an' atween them the ill-will that was steered up, an' the bitin an' scartin, an' flytin like kail-wives an' sweirin like cairters, took a' the pleasure oot o' life. Auld frien's cam nigh to handcuffs ower the question o' the kirk, an' wadna darken ane anither's doors; an' men quarrelled wi' their wives, an' sat glunshin an' gloomin at the chimley-cheeks, or gaed awa to the public; an' brither cuist oot wi' brither, an' faither wi' son; an' ye couldna be lang in ony company withoot some-thin bein said that gart them a' tak the bizz thegither, an' syne there was an end to guid-fellowship an' richt feelin.

For mysel, I said as little as I could help to onybody, either in the hoose or oot o't. Jess had nae dou'ts on the subjec'; bein a wumman,

of coorse she kent naethin aboot the politics, an' it never entered into her heid that a' I had to dae wasna as simple as A B buff. She said that hangin was ower guid for Tod-Lowrie, or ony ither man wha wad lay a finger on the kirk; an' if he cam up to Cauldshiel, she wad send him hame wi' a flee in his lug that wad gar him mind the day for a while. "A Queen's Coonsellor he ca's himsel, the dirty thief!" says she. "Guid peety the Queen gin she lippens to ony sic coonsellers; she'll be but ill guidit, puir body!"

It was a doug's life I led amang them a', late an' air—an e after anither speerin at me what side I was gaun to tak, an' this ane sayin, "Ye'll suirly no' desert the kirk?" an' that ane sayin, "Ye'll suirly never vote for a Tory?" Wullie Herkis, an' Dave Da'gleish, an' Robbie Dodds, an' Adam Instant, an' a wheen mair o' them, were aye at me seekin my advice, for they said their wits were fair jummilt—whan they heard Tod-Lowrie, they thocht it wad dae the kirk a heap o' guid to be disestaiblished; an' syne again, whan they heard the meenister, they thocht it wad be perfect ruination. That ill-gien deevil An'ra Wabster never missed a chance o' haein a jag at me, misca'in me for a turncoat, an' a rin-awa, an' scodgy to the laird, an' a' the rest o't. An' Archie Howden wad argy wi' me by the hoor, waggin his white pow, an makin oot Tod-Lowrie to be raither waur nor Auld Nick himsel.

Mony's the time I'm suir I wushed them a' at the back o' beyont.

But the ane that tried me sairest was Geordie Runciman the carrier. It wasna that Geordie said that muckle: if he had, I could ha' gien him as guid again. It was his naisty, smudgin, snirtin way, an' the slee looks he cuist at me oot the tail o' his een, that whiles gart me wush I had ne'er been made an elder, an' syne I nicht ha' taen a sweir to mysel, an' coonted it nae hairm. Brawly I kent what the Frees were up til. They didna want to gie tongue ower lood, for fear o' spilin the game; but they were like to jump oot o' their skins at the prospec' o' gettin the kirk pu'd down, an' oor ain members to dae their dirty wark. I thocht it middlin queer, if disestaiblishment was to be for the guid o' the kirk, as Tod-Lowrie said, that the Frees should be sae desperate keen to bring it on; an' the sicht o' Geordie Runciman, gaun aboot as hie as Gilderoy, an' lookin as if the haill parish belanged til him, was maist eneuch to drive a body into votin Tory.

"Weel, elder," says he to me ae day I met in wi' him, "hae ye heard aboot the gran' discoorse we had frae oor meenister last Sabbath?"

"No, deacon," says I, "I haena heard o't; I thocht he was in the auld hech-how, aye pechin through Chronicles."

"Na, na," says he, "he's düne wi' Chronicles

lang syne; his text was oot o' Jeremiah, an' a maist impressive sermon he gied us."

"Ay?" says I; "an' what was his text?"

"I'll gie ye't as near as I can," says he; "it was about Moab: 'We hae heard o' the pride o' Moab: Moab has been at ease frae his youth, he has settled on his lees, an' hasna been toomed oot frae vessel to vessel: the horn o' Moab is cuttit aff an' his airm is broken: O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, an' dwell in the rock, an' be like the doo that bigs her nest in the hole o' the rock.'"

"Losh keep us!" says I; "if the sermon was as lang-tail'd as the text, I no' wonder it impressed ye! An' whae micht Moab be, Geordie?"

"Moab was your kirk," says he.

"An' whae was the doo?" says I; "your ane, I'm thinkin?"

"Ay," says he; "he said it was juist a leevin pictur o' the Kirk o' the Disruption—the doo that biggit her nest in the hole o' the rock."

"A bonny-like doo!" says I; "gin he had said a hoodie-craw, sittin on a dyke by a fa'n yowe, an' shairpenin its beak to pike her banes, he wad ha' been nearer the bit, to my mind. An' ye can tell your meenister frae me no' to be in ower big a hurry. Muckle may fa' atween the cap an' the lip. The Auld Kirk's no' juist what ye micht ca' deid; she's got a kick or twa left in her. We're no braxy yet, Geordie, my

man!" That was what I said til him; but a' the same, I was gey dram-heartit, seein the way things were gaun.

Ye maunna think the kirk pairty sat still an' did naethin, a' the time this was gaun on. Tod-Lowrie's speech had gien the alairm wi' a vengeance, an' what wi' peteetions, an' leagues, an' lecturs, an' defence meetins, an' letters to the papers, an' prentit screeds poored in upon ye eneuch to paper a room wi'—they raised plenty o' stour, onyway, whether they did muckle guid or no'.

We had a session meetin on the heid o't—ye should ha' seen the way auld Liddell o' Wedderlairs keepit his ee nailed on me, like a cat watchin a moose—an' the meenister spak til us raal sensible, as he aye did. He said he had keepit quiet on the subjec', up till noo, for he had nae belief in rinnin ram-stam into agitation, an' bleezin awa a' your pouther afore the day o' battle cam. But there was nae denyin things were gettin sarious; the minds o' the folk were bein unsettled, an' filled wi' ae-sided an' misleadin statements, no' to ca' them waur; an' we bûde to mak a stan', an' bring hame the trüth aboot the Kirk to them wha had her fate in their han's, an' wha wad hae to dree the dirdum gin ony scaith cam til her. Syne Liddell said—aye glowrin at me—that ony man wha didna support the kirk in her hoor o' need deserved to get his paiks in

this warld, an' a het corner in the neist, atween Judas Iscariot an' the Fause Menteith : but forby this, there wasna a word oot o' jint spoken in the session.

We agreed to hae a meetin o' the congregation on an early day. It was weel attendit, an' twa-three meenister bodies gied addresses, aboot the teinds, an' the humbug o' releegious equality, an' the history o' the kirk, an' a' she had düne for Scotland. The folk appeared to listen weel eneuch, but bein in the kirk they didna like to mak muckle noise, an' I canna say the meetin was sae hearty as Tod-Lowrie's ane in the public ha'. Syne oor ain man said that he had a paper wi' him, an' a'body that wushed weel to the kirk nicht sign it afore the meetin skail'd ; an' the maist feck o' them gaed up an' put doun their names, an' Jess an' me amang them.

About this time the meenister gied a coorse o' sermons that set a' the tongues in the parish waggin. I mind some o' his texts yet. There was ane frae the text, " For whilk o' thae things div ye stanee me ?"—a grand ane it was, a' aboot the debt that Scots folk awed to their kirk for stan'in up for their richts an' liberties an' makin them what they were, an' the ill payment it wad be to gang an' disestablish her. An' there was anither frae the text, " Naebody can enter, intil a strang man's hoose, an' spile his guid, excep' he first bin' the strang man, an' syne he wull spile his hoose"—

an' he tell't us the kirk was a' richt, an' abüne the reach o' hairm, gin her ain sons thocht for themselves, an' didna juist gie themsels ower, bund han' an' fit, to ony poleetical leader or pairty. An' there was anither frae the text, "I haena spoken in secret, in a dark place o' the yirth." That was about the testimony the kirk had aye upliftit, in an open an' abüne-buird way; no' like her enemies, wha worked below-grund like moudies, an' confüsed the minds o' the folk, an' left them sittin like craws in a mist. An' there was anither frae the text, "An' Haman said unto the king, Let it be written that they may be destroyed, an' I wull pay ten thoosand talents o' siller intil the han's o' them that hae the chairge o' the business." That was aboot disendowment, an' the sair wrang it wad dae to the kirk; an' there was nae dou't the portrait he gied us o' Haman had an unco likeness to Tod-Lowrie. But the ane I likit best of a' was frae the text, "Remember the children o' Edom in the day o' Jerusalem, hoo they said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof." What wad I no' ha' gien to hae had Geordie Runciman in oor kirk that day to hear that sermon! The Frees got their wheeps, I can tell ye; he wasna mealy-mou'd wi' them. Tamson wi' his Moab cam a hunder mile ahint, for he had naethin like the same command o' language, an' a' his notion o' preachin was juist to dad the buik an' skirl his text ower an' ower again. Ye may say what

ye like aboot Broun, but he was a fell preacher; gey ill to rouse, but aince ye had fairly crossed him, there wasna his marrow for layin it on. It was a waly hammer he swung, an' my certy, whan he brocht it doun, he gart the stiddy dirl an' the sparks flee.

An'ra Wabster was in an awfu' funk at thae sermons. He said they were poleetical; an' it was naethin short o' scandalous an' ootrageous for ony meenister, mair especially ane wha was paid by the state, to bring politics into the pu'pit. He said hoo could the Tories hae the face to set up a howl aboot the Irish priests tellin the folk what way to vote, whan the verra same thing was bein düne at oor ain doors? He said he wad lift his lines, an' the first time he cam across the meenister he wad gie him a bit o' his mind into the bargain; no' that he ever did either the tane or the tither. For my pairt, I had nae faut to fin' wi' the sermons. I couldna see, an' I canna see yet, what way the Free an' the U. P. meenisters should get leave to rin awa wi' the mear, an' oor anes be ca'd thieves for nae mair nor lookin ower the dyke. If it wasna politics to hae a fling at the kirk, what way should it be politics to pit in a word for her?

XI

PRINGLE THE CIVIL-SPOKEN

AN' noo I'll hae to tell ye aboot a thing that landed me in sair trouble at the time, an' the truth is I'm no' suir yet whether I did richt or wrang. We had been down to the railway ae day wi' the cairts, for cake; an' as we were gaun through the toun, passin Pringle the writer's office, oot comes Pringle himsel, an' stops me, an' shakes han's verra frien'ly. He was a fine, free-spoken, hamely kind o' man, Pringle, an' I had aye gien him credit for haein as muckle honesty as ye could reasonably expec' o' a la'yer.

"An' hoo are ye keepin, Maister Inwick?" says he; "an' hoo's the mistress?"

"Thank ye," says I; "no' that ill. An' hoo are ye yoursel, Maister Pringle?"

"Middlin," says he; "I hae an awfu' heap on my mind, Maister Inwick. My wark's no' like yours: it's never düne."

"I daur say," says I; "I'm suir ye dinna hain yoursel, sir."

"Can ye no' leave your cairts for a bit meenute

or twa," says he, "an' come in by to the office? I wad like to hae a word wi' ye."

"Weel," says I, "if it's no' for lang, I micht." An' in I gaed wi' him.

"Ye've no' been in here afore, Maister Inwick?" says he; "ye've no' brocht ony business my way, as faur as I can ca' to mind?"

"Na," says I; "I'm thankfu' to say I hae ne'er had ony trokins wi' the la'yers a' my days. I aye mind o' what my auld faither used to tell us: Law's costly: tak a pint an' 'gree."

"That's gey guid," says he, wi' a lauch, "but a' trades maun live, ye ken, as the wife said whan she brunt her besom. Ye'll no' ha' had your mornin yet, Maister Inwick? Ye maun hae a bit dram, juist to show there's nae ill-wull."

Wi' that he feshed a bottle an' twa glesses oot o' a press, an' poored oot a gey stiff ane for me an' a wee drappie for himsel. "Here's t'ye, Maister Inwick," says he, "an' I'm prood to see ye sittin whaur ye are."

"Thank ye, sir," says I, "an' here's to your verra guid health, an' mony days may ye see. Man, that's gran' stuff ye keep," says I.

"I'm glad ye like it," says he, "for ye'll be a jidge, I'm thinkin. Bein an' elder, Maister Inwick, ye ocht to ken about the quality o' the Auld Kirk."

"It's the king o' a' drinks," says I, "whan ye get it guid, an' that's no' aye, mair's the peety."

"Wull ye hae ony watter?" says he.

"No, thank ye," says I; "I'll no' pit the carle abüne the gentleman."

"Weel, here's success to the Leebéral cause," says he, "an' a bigger win neist time nor we had the last!"

"Wi' a' my heart," says I.

"They tell't me ye had chainged your principles," says he, "an' gaen ower to the tither side, but I kent fine it wasna true. We hae aye looked upon ye as a main stoop o' the pairty up by roun' the hill-fits, Maister Inwick—oor member has aye said that he wad raither hae you at his back nor a dizzen o' the lairds—an' if there was onythin in the pairty prograwm that gaed against the grain wi' ye, I'm suir he wad like to hae your views, an' wad consider them weel."

"Weel, sir," says I, "to be perfectly honest wi' ye, I'm no' satisfied in my ain mind aboot this kirk business. There's mair nor me o' the same way o' thinkin—we no' want to pit oot oor member, but a' the same we want to dae what's richt by oor kirk. It's an awfu' peety that Tod-Lowrie ever set the ba' rowin. What for could he no' gae on the ways he was daein, an' let the kirk a-be?"

"He couldna help himsel, Maister Inwick," says he; "ye maunna blame him: he couldna dae ither nor what he's düne. It wasna him that set the ba' rowin, as ye say—neither him nor ony

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ither man. Ye see, disestaiblishment's a pairt o' the Leebereal program noo—it's what they ca' a plank in their platform; an' if ye're to get a' thae ither reforms carried oot, this ane wull hae to gang wi' them. Maister Tod-Lowrie had to mak up his mind whether to keep step wi' his pairty in reformin the kirk, or to quit it a'thegither. He put the maitter afore his conscience, as he tell't me himsel, an' considered it weel; an' a' that he's düne, ye may be suir, he's düne because he thocht it richt, an' best for the workin folk o' the kintra. Ye heard him say yoursel that he was nae enemy o' the kirk, an' that disestaiblishment wad dae the kirk nae hairm, but guid?"

"Ay, I heard him," says I, "but I canna juist say I took it in. Ye see, oor meenister tells us the verra opposite. He says a' yon aboot the kirk sufferin frae bein connectit wi' the state is naethin but an impident mak-up o' her enemies. He says whan there's onythin wrang wi' a man's inside, the man himsel is commonly the first to ken o't; an' even supposin he wasna feelin up to the mark, he wadna like some coorse tyke o' a horse-doctor to grup a haud o' him in the street, an' shove a naisty stinkin bolus doun his throat withoot ever askin his leave. An' as for disestaiblishment makin nae difference, he says we canna sell the coo an' sup the milk, an' if we let the kirk gang we'll find oot the warth o't by the want o't."

"Weel, Maister Inwick," says he, "I wad be the last man to breathe a word against your meenister. I ken the respec' ye hae for him, an' there's nae man whase opeenion I wad süner lippen to, on ony question forby this o' the kirk. But ye ken he's but human, after a'—we a' hae oor bits o' wakenesses, Maister Inwick—an' there's naethin sets the jidgment ajee like the thocht o' oor ain interests bein affeckit. I'm no' sayin, mind ye, that he means it, an' verra likely he's no' aware o't; but for a' that, bein an interested pairty, he's no' fit to haud the scales level, like you an' me. He's lookin at the maitter through specs, as ane micht say, an' no' wi' his ain een."

"There may be somethin in that," says I.

"Noo," says he, "I'm gaun to say somethin til ye that I haena said yet to anither leevin soul; an' I say't to you because ye're a man to be trusted, an' a man whase opeenion is warth the haein. Ye ken oor member has been shamefully misrepresentit on this question: the meenisters an' ithers hae held him up as an enemy o' releegion, an' an ill-wusher to the kirk, an' a robber o' her patrimony. Ye'll ha' heard sic things said aboot him at some o' your kirk defence meetins?"

"Weel," says I, "I'll no' say but I've been by whan he got it gey shairp ower the fingers."

"Juist as I thocht," says he; "weel, it's no' true, no' a word o't; an' to prove it's no' true—

an' this is what I want to say til ye, Maister Inwick, in stric' confidence, as atween man an' man — *they're gaun to bring in a Bill in the Parliament.*"

"A Bill?" says I; "what 'n kind o' Bill?"

"A disestaiblishment Bill," says he, "that winna dae the kirk ony kind o' hairm whatever. A Bill that winna touch the kirks an' manses an' gairdens, an' winna mak your meenister a penny the puirer. A Bill to let the kirk doun sae saft she'll ne'er find the difference; an' at the same time, Maister Inwick, I may say to you, aye in stric' confidence, a Bill that wull confer immense benefits on the workin classes o' the kintra."

"Ay?" says I; "an' whae's gaun to bring it in? Is 't the Government?"

"No," says he, "it's no' juist exac'ly the Government. It's Maister Tod-Lowrie, an' a wheen mair Leeberal members, wha hae put their names til't; but there's nae dou't the Government wull tak it up an' see that it wins through. Wait or ye see the Bill, Maister Inwick; ye'll ken than whether or no' oor member's an enemy o' the kirk. I'm thinkin some o' them that hae been clattin a' the roads o' the coonty for dirt to throw at him wull be ashamed o' theirsels, aince this is made public, an' they see what 'n injustice they hae dūne him."

"D'ye tell me?" says I.

"Ay," says he, "but ye maun keep it to your-

sel for a bit. There's juist ae thing I'm no' suir about. I dou't the Free Kirk folk wull no' be ower weel pleased wi't."

"That's guid hearin'," says I.

"Noo, I want ye to promise me this, Maister Inwick," says he, "no' to pledge yoursel to the tither side, or aince ye hae seen the Bill, an' heard oor member explain it for himsel. That's but fair, suirly."

"Ou ay, I'll promise ye that," says I; "I'm no' awfu' fond o' pledgin mysel at ony rate, either to the tae side or the tither."

"An' ye'll move the vote o' confidence in oor member, wull ye no'?" says he; "I mean, of coorse, gin ye're satisfied, as I'm suir ye wull be, wi' this Bill, an' wi' what Maister Tod-Lowrie has to say about it? The last time he was up at the hills, 'Whaur's my auld frien' Inwick,' says he, 'the soondest politeecian o' them a'?' The meetin's no' the same wantin him.' That was what he said, an' I ken he wad be awfu' pleased to see ye get up an' mak the motion."

"D'ye think sae?" says I; "well, we'll see about it. I'll be at his meetin, onyway, an' gie him my best attention; an' if he can show me a way o' daein what's richt as an elder o' the kirk withoot haein to vote Tory, I'll be muckle behauden til him, an' mair nor me."

He said he was weel pleased wi' this, an' he wadna press me ony further; sae awa I gaed

my ways, thinkin to mysel what a fine, ceevil-spoken man Pringle was, an' what gran' whusky he keepit; and what a gran' Bill this maun be that was to disestaiblish the kirk withoot daein her ony hairm.

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XII

"THESE DEGENERATE DAYS"

It was weel on to the darkenin or I wan hame, for it was a sair road up to Cauldshiel for laden't beas'; an' whan I gaed into the stable, the first thing I saw was Archie Howden's gray powny stan'in in ane o' the stalls. An' whan I had bedded an' supper'd my horse, an' cam yont to the hoose, there I fand Archie himsel, sittin at the ingle-neuk haein a twa-handit crack wi' the wife, wha was thrang bakin scones. Archie an' Jess were aye awfu' chief; she said he was a raal wise body, wi' an unco droll way o' expressin himsel; an it's my belief she thocht mair o' his opeenion on some things nor she did o' my ain. Ye ken what the weemen are: born Tories, ilka mither's dochter o' them. If ever the weemen folk get the vote, I'm thinkin it wull be an ill browst for the Leeb-eral pairty.

"Well, Archie," I says to him, "what's brocht ye here the nicht, no' but what ye're wal-come?"

"I cam up aboot bushin a pair o' wheels for Britherston," says he, "and I thocht I wad gie

ye a ca' ; an' the mistress here wad hae me bide or ye cam hame."

"An' she did verra richt," says I; "an' noo ye maun sit doun an' tak a bite wi' us, gin ye'll mak the best o' what's gaun."

"I'm no' feared to tak pat-luck in your wife's hoose, Jims," says he; "an' hunger's guid kitchen: I haena brak breid sin' denner-time."

"Weel," says I, "I'll awa but, an' gie mysel a clean up, an' be wi' ye in a meenute."

A' the time I was saipin mysel I heard the twasome crackin thegither; their tongues never lay; an' it was a' aboot the ill days we were leevin in, an' a'thing bein chainged for the waur, an' the haill kintra gaun to the bad place. "Go!" thinks I to mysel, "gin Pringle heard ye, he wadna ken he was in a Leebereal hoose!"

"There's nae respec' in the preesent generation," says Archie, "neither for the laird, nor the meenister, nor the dominie. In oor young days, Mistress Inwick, we were feared for the meenister—ye mind hoo he üsed to gae roun' catecheezin us?—but noo, the lads an' lasses dae juist what they like; their ain faithers an' mithers hae nae control ower them, an' as for what the meenister may say, they didna care a bodle!"

"Ay, that's true," says Jess, in the middle o' settin the table; "an' what's mair, they hae nae respec' for theirsels. I hae seen the day whan

a body wad ha' dee'd o' hunger an' cauld süner nor crave a bawbee frae the Buird ; but noo they think nae shame o't ava—ye'll see them waste their siller on drink or dress, an' syne thig a' they can get aff the pairish, as if it was nae business o' theirs to hae onything laid by for their auld days."

"That's the ill lesson oor lawmakers hae learnt them, Mistress Inwick," says Archie ; "they hae learnt the cat the way to the kirn. Wi' their free this an' free that, they hae taen awa the auld independent speerit, an' gart the folk think they hae nae mair a-dae nor souk an' wag their tails."

"'Deed, that's raal true," says Jess.

"An' what's mair," says he, "the breed's fa'in aff. The men haena the same stuff in them noo-a-days. There was nane o' that influenza whan I was a laddie."

"I daursay no'," says she ; "I no' mind o' my mither ever keepin drugs in the hoose, unless it micht be castor ile an' camovine ; but noo, they hae as mony compliments as there's pairts o' the body, an' they're aye dosin theirsels. Ye canna gae intil a hind's hoose withoot seein a raw o' medicine bottles an' pawtent drugs stan'in on the chimley-piece."

"It's thae foreign yirbs that's spilin folk's stamacks," says he. "Whan I was a callant, I ne'er saw flour breid in my faither's hoose. My

mither was gey frail, an' *she* got tea whiles; but unco wake she made it. Folk wadna drink the like o't noo: they wad say it was the syndins o' the maskin-pat. There was nae jeelly pieces an' fried meat, an' nae tea on the Sunday afternūes than. We got oor parritch in the mornin, an' a drink o' milk an' a dawd o' bannock, if we likit, afore we gaed awa to the kirk; an' whan we cam hame we had oor denner—kail, an' the flesh that was biled in't, an' pitaties. Syne we had the kail het up again to oor supper, afore we gaed to oor beds; an' if we didna like to tak it, we juist got leave to hunger. That was the way my faither an' mither brocht up eleeven o' us to be men an' weemen; an' for mysel, though I hae had my bits o' towts whiles, I've ne'er taen to my bed excep' to sleep, an' ne'er paid awa saxpence to a doctor a' the days I've seen."

"An' I can say the same o' mysel, Maister Howden," says Jess; "whan I was a lassock, we got oor parritch fourteen times in the week; but noo the bairns winna look at them, they're that denty, set them up! As for the lasses, what they're comin to I dinna ken. They read faur ower mony o' thae novels, an' get their silly heids turned wi' a' kind o' nonsense. Maist o' their wages gangs on their backs, an' it's eneuch to scunner a body to see the way they carry on—rakin the roads, wi' their hair pu'd down ower their een, an' their sleeves hotched up ower their shouthers,

plaistered a' ower wi' cheap lace an' ribbons, an' their coats trauchlin in the glaur ahint them. What their mithers are thinkin about I canna tell, but it's no' the way we were brocht up: we werna spil't an' dawtit that gait. An' what the senseless hizzies are to dae whan they come to hae a hoose an' bairns o' their ain, guid kens! I'm suir I peety ony man wha gets ane o' the thowless, han'less tawpies!"

"An' weel ye may, Mistress Inwick," says Archie; "ye mind the auld by-word: he has faut o' a wife that mairries mam's pet. But it's the way wi' them a' noo-a-days. There's nae contentment wi' things as they are. A'boddy maun rax abüne his station, an' copy his betters. An' they're that keen o' a chainge they canna bide lang in ae place; they maun be aye on the move frae toun to toun, mair like tinklers nor dacent workin folk. Weel, they say chainges are lichtsome, but they're no' aye for the better, I'm thinkin."

"Deed they are no'," says she; "mony's the time I hae said it to Jims, Better rue sittin nor rue flittin."

"An' ye see hoo mony o' the young lads get tired o' drivin horse," says he, "an' maun awa to the toun, whaur they see mair, nae dou't, but aib-lins dinna fare sae weel."

"Deed no'," says Jess; "I was ne'er in the toun but aince—ae Hansel Monday I gaed in wi'

Jims, to veesit a cuisin o' his an' see the shop windies. Hech, sirs, but I was glad whan it cam roun' to train time! What wi' trailin ower thae weary stane streets, atween thae muckle raws o' hooses, an' the racket, an' the pushin an' drivin, an' the jundies ye got frae the folk gin ye stoppit for a meenute to see aboot ye, I was fair forjeskit. I had my fill o' the toun that day, an' I've ne'er socht back again, as Jims can tell ye. He coft me a bonny hussie to mind me o' the day, but I no' needed onythin to mind me o't. Na, na; let me bide amang kent faces, an' breathe caller air!"

"Ay, but that's juist what folk want noo, racket an' steer," says he; "you an' me are ahint the times, Mistress Inwick. I can see't fine in my ain line o' business. Lang syne, whan there was a death, the frien's üsed to pu' down the blinds an' sit still in the hoose; they wadna cross the door-stap or aince the funeral was by. But noo, the way they carry on, gallivantin aboot, an' fleein here an' fleein there—dod, ye wad think that naebody bides at hame noo but the corp."

"Houts, Archie," says I, comin ben the hoose at this pint, "ye're gaun ower faur a'thegither. Man, hae ye nae belief in progress? Can ye no' see ony guid in the spread o' knowledge an' yed-dication? Ye suirly dinna think the folk o' this kintra are a' rinnin doun a steep place intil the sea, like the herd o' swine we're tell't aboot in the Bible?"

"That's juist exac'ly what I think," says he.

"Ye wadna think it," says I, "gin it chanced that a Tory Government wan in."

"Gin a Tory Government wan in," says he, "they wadna disestaiblish oor kirk."

"Than I'm suir I hope they'll win in," says Jess, "an' no' be lang aboot it; an' aince they are in, I hope they'll bide." I no' made ony remark on this; for I ken better nor speak aboot the politics to a wumman, mair especially whan ye're mairrit on her. So a' I said was, "C'wa, guid-wife, an' get us oor supper."

"Aboot thae disestaiblishers," says Archie, after we had lichted oor pipes, an' Jess had taped us oot oor allooance, "did ye ever, in a' your life, ken sic dirty wark dūne in sic a dirty way? There they are, gaun up an' down the face o' the yirth, like the enemy o' a' mankind, stappin the lugs o' the folk wi' lees, an' threepin that disestaiblishment wull dae the kirk nae hairm: an' a' the time, no' a word o' what they mean to dae; nae-thin that ye can tak a haud o', an' say whether it's guid or ill."

"What wad ye hae them dae?" says I.

"Bring in their Bill," says he: "come oot, an' fecht us in the open. Deal wi' us like statesmen, an' no' like thimble-riggers at a fair. If your Leeberal Government means to tak the job on han', what way div they no' say sae, an' gie us a wheen parteec'lars? But deil a fear o' them;

they ken better; an' ye'll ne'er get a glisk o' their Bill or aince they hae gotten a grup o' your votes."

Eh, my man, thinks I to mysel, ye're aff your eggs an' on cauld chucky-stanes noo! If ye kent what I ken, it wad gar ye chainge your tune. I was sair temptit to tell him aboot the Bill, but I minded what Pringle had said—that what he had tell't me was in stric' confidence, as atween man an' man, an' I maun clap my thoom on't. So I no' said onythin, an' juist let him haver on.

"I'm hopin Tod-Lowrie winna get in," he says; "I ken twa-three o' his auld supporters wha hae made up their minds to quit him, forby yoursels, Jims."

Noo, I hadna made up my mind to quit Tod-Lowrie; in fac', I hadna made it up either the tae way or the tither. I was waitin for mair licht, as ony sensible man wad ha' düne. If Archie an' me had been by oorsels, I wad ha' tell't him sae, an' argied the maitter oot wi' him; but Jess bein by, an hearin a' that was said, what was I to dae? I had nae great goo o' discussin public questions wi' her at ony time, for the less the weemen folk tak to dae wi' sic things the better, in my opeenion; an aboot this kirk business, mair especially, she wad hearken to neither rhyme nor reason, an' the verra mention o' Tod-Lowrie's name was eneuch to gar her fuff up like a pioy.

"Eh, the scoondrel!" says she; "it's mony a lang day sin' I saw through him, an' ower an' ower again hae I said it to Jims: Hoo can ye find it in your conscience to vote for a man like yon, that caresna wha be tirr'd gin he be theekit, an' disna believe ae single word o' a' he says til ye?" I no' mind o' ever hearin her say onythin o' the sort afore this kirk question crappit up. But I didna think it warth while to correc' her; it's aye best to let a wumman pit oot her barm in her ain way.

"It's his speakin, Mistress Inwick," says Archie; "I hae heard him for mysel, an' I no' wonder that folk were taen in wi' him. There's nae doubt he has the gift o' phrasin; he wad wyle the laverocks oot o' the lift, as ane might say. He aye minded me o' that verse in the Bible: 'The words o' his mooth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart; his words were safer than ile, yet were they drawn swords.' But he's drawn his swerd aince ower aften, I'm thinkin, whan he took on han' to stick the kirk. He'll find ye canna coup a kirk juist as easy as ye coup a cairt. An' it's mebbe a' for the best, Mistress Inwick; wha kens? For gin he hadna shown his cloven cloots, Jims here might ha' gaen on believin in him an votin for him to the end o' his days."

That was the way the twa o' them carried on, flingin the ba' frae the tane to the tither; an'

me sittin by an' hearin them, an' no' sayin ony mair nor I could help. I was neither sad nor sorry whan it chappit nine on the knock, an' Archie got up an' said he maun be gaun, or they wad be wonderin doun by what had come ower him. I was fine pleased to see his back turned, I can tell ye; no' but what I likit his company, but I was never suir o' what I micht be drawn into sayin; an' I minded o' what Pringle had gar't me promise, that I wadna pledge mysel or aince I had seen the Bill.

XIII

A FIRST READING OF THE BILL

No' lang after this, it micht be a fortnicht or three weeks, Tod-Lowrie an' his frien's brocht in their Bill in the Parliament. It was a' in the papers, an' ae nicht I sat doun to read it ower to mysel; an' I büde to lay my haill mind til't, for thae la'yers' screeds are unco swirlie, an' ye canna gae straucht at the meanin o' them, nae mair nor a ferret after a rabbit. As my auld faither üsed to say, there's aye ower mony Knotty Tammies in the la'yer's parritch.

As faur as I could mak oot, Pringle had been gey near the mark in what he said aboot the Bill. Nae dou't it made a wheen chainges. The Commissioner's Walk in Embro was to be düne awa wi'. I mind o' seein't aince whan I was a haflin laddie, an' a bonny show I thoct it, wi' the sodgers, an' the cooncillor bodies in their red cloaks an' cockit hats, an' the muckle guns firin frae the Castle, an' the crouds in the streets; but after a', the kirk could dae fine wantin that, an' the toun's folk hae plenty to look at ony day o' the week. An' there was to be nae mair pro-

claimin o' banns in the kirk. Weel, that seemed a kind o' peety, tae. The lads had aye been üsed, as faur back as I could mind, to gang to the session clerk on the Saiturday nicht, an' tak their cryin siller an' their witnesses wi' them; for my ain pairt, I wad raither be cried in the kirk nor battered up on the registrar's buird; but that was juist a maitter o' feelin, an' it cam to the same thing in the end. An' the meenister an' session werena to hae a seat ony mair on the Parochial Buird. I had ne'er attendit ony meet-ins o' the Buird mysel, no' bein able to leave my wark, so that didna mak ony difference to me; but I had aye understüde that the meenister spak up for the puir, an' kent whae needit a bit help better nor ony ither body, an' whiles got a laid o' coals or a pair o' buits for some puir cratur that micht ha' wanted them gin he hadna been there to pit in a word. But a'body kens that there never was a great measure o' reform cairrit yet, withoot somebody bein nane the better o't; an' forby that, gin the Buird was to be eleckit, there was nae reason what way the meenister shouldna get a seat on't.

As for what was to be düne wi' the kirk, I couldna but say it a' seemed fair eneuch. We had been tell't at some o' the defence meetins that a' the pairish kirks wad be sell't by unction, or ens pu'd down an cairted awa; an' the meen-isters turned oot o' hoose an' hauld. But there

was naethin o' that kind in the Bill. It said that the congregations were to hae the kirks to worship in, an' the meenisters were to keep their manses. An' the man was nane sae ill aff that sat in Snawdon Manse rent free; a muckle, weel-biggit hoose it was—it had fourteen chimley-cans, nae less—in a pleesant, lown spot, wi' mebbe half an acre o' gress an' gairden grund roun' aboot it, an' a stable an' byre an' pig's craive, an' a yaird for keepin fools, an' a deuk-pond, an' in fac' a'thing a body could want to live like a gentleman. I could ha' been daein wi' a hantle less mysel.

But whaur the Bill cam oot best, in my opeenion, was the way it disposed o' the glebes an' steepen's. There were different things ye nicht dae wi' them. Ye nicht pit up a hospital on the glebe, or ye nicht mak a public park o't. Weel, neither the tane nor the tither was muckle wanted in Snawdon, for it was a by-ordinar healthy pairish, an' onybody wha wasna weel wad raither dee or get better in his ain hoose; an' as for a public park, if ye were minded to tak a walk, there were the roads, an' if ye wanted to sit down an' rest ye, there were plenty o' dykes an' palins.

Than, wi' the steepen', ye nicht set up a public library, or ye nicht spend it on what they ca' the "higher yeddcation." I canna say I thoct muckle o' thae objec's. I didna see ony great

need o' a library, for if ye were keen o' readin, an' the papers didna content ye, there was the composure aye gaun roun', an' ye could buy a buik oot o' his pack that wad keep ye gaun a gey while, an' no' cost ye that muckle to speak o'. An' as for the tither objec', seeing it taks the buird offisher to be aye huntin up the folk to get them to send their weans to the schule at a', an' ye'll no find ane in a score that wull keep a laddie at the schule a day after he's passed his standards, I couldna see what way guid siller should be wasted on the higher yeddicatoin, whan there dinna appear to be that muckle o' a demand for the lower kind.

But there were ither proveesions in the Bill mair like the thing. Ye micht tak the glebe, an' divide it up into gairdens for the workin folk, or ye micht mak sma' allotments o't. Maist o' the feuars in Snawdon village had bits o' kail-yairds o' their ain, that gaed wi' their hooses, an' didna want mair; an' I couldna but think it wad be a kind o' peety to break up the glebe into gairdens. But for sma' allotments, there was nae dou't it wad dae fine. There were three fields o't, yeel fenced an drained, lyin bonny to the sun, an' clever land; no' sae clean as it should ha' been, for the meen-ister was a better han' at the preachin nor at the fairmin; but no' wantin that muckle to mak

it as guid a bit o' haugh-grund for crappin as there was in the pairish.

An' than, oot o' the steepen' the pleuchmen nicht get what they wanted to stock their sma' holdins, an' for my pairt I couldna think o' a better or mair sensible way o' layin oot the siller. I didna ken to a saxpence what the steepen' o' Snawdon pairish nicht come til. An'ra Wabster, an' Tam Arnott, an' some mair o' them üsed to pit it awfu' hie, an' say it was fair disgracefu' for ae man to hae sae muckle a' to himsel. It was a sayin o' my auld faither's: Maidens' tochers an' meenisters' steepen's are aye less than they're ca'd; an' nae dou't it was true. But as faur as I could mak oot, there was atween three an' four hunder in the year comin in, an' onybody could see that that wad gae a guid way in settin up a wheen o' us in oor sma' holdins, aince we got them.

Weel, that was Tod-Lowrie's Bill, or at ony rate the main pints o't. I'll no' say I was a'thegither satisfied in my ain mind that it was a' richt, but there was nae denyin that it lookit bonny in prent. They tell't us at the defence meetins that the siller belanged the kirk, an' gin we took it awa frae the kirk, an' spent it on ither things, it wad be what they ca'd sacrileege, an' we need expec' nae blessin, but a curse o' the maist fearsome kind, to gang wi't. An'ra Wabster said for his pairt he was wullin to risk

the curse as lang as he got the siller; but a'boddy wha had ony acquaintance wi' An'ra kent that he didna mean abüne the tae half o' what he said. An' if it was true what they tell't us at the defence meetins, that to gae in for disendowment was juist robbin the sanctuary, an' as guid as sayin we thocht mair o' oor bodies nor we did o' oor souls, than it büde to be said the Bill didna look that verra bonny whan ye cam to consider it. But than, on the tither han', Tod-Lowrie an' his frien's said the teinds didna belang the kirk ava, but the nation—in ither words, oorsels; an' a' we wad be daein was juist to tak the cash oot o' ae pooch an' pit it intil anither; an' it wadna be as if we were toomin the pooch, either, for the kirk wad hae plenty to gae on wi', an' nae diffeeculty in raisin mair. The haill question cam to be, Wha's aucht the siller? I hae heard mony answers in my day, an' mony argyments aboot it; but I canna say I ever got it made clear to my mind yet.

I no' said a word to Jess aboot the Bill. What was the üse? She wadna ha' understüde it, for thae things are ower deep for the minds o' weemen folk. An' forby that, it wad ha' been eneuch for her that Tod-Lowrie had onythin to dae wi't—she wad juist ha' flown into a passion, an' refused to look at the maitter frae ony pint o' view but her ain. An' as she never

looked into the papers for hersel, but aye lip-pened to me to read oot to her aboot the murders an' railway accidents an' sic like, she no' kent onythin aboot it. Of coorse, if Archie Howden had been comin up oor way he wad ha' let the haill thing oot; but it so happened that Archie had a job down in the low country that keepit him awa frae hame for a week or twa; an' I canna say I was in ony great hurry for him to come back. I heard plenty aboot the Bill ootside, but I no' said verra muckle: for I wanted to keep my mind open, as I had promised to Pringle, or aince I had heard what Tod-Lowrie had to say.

XIV

A DISCUSSION BY THE WAY

THE nicht o' Tod-Lowrie's meetin, whan I cam hame frae my wark, an' tell't the wife I was thinkin o' gaun down by, she wasna ower weel pleased. "What for wad ye gang an' listen to a man like yon?" says she; "a man that's as fu' o' tricks as the pedlar's puggy, an' that never lees but whan the holyn's green? I thocht ye had fand him oot by this time, an' that he had sickened ye aince for a' wi' his fleechin an' flethers. Ye wad be better sittin at your ain fireside, giein a body your crack, to my way o' thinkin, nor trampin a' that road, on a mirk wat nicht, to get your wits daivert at a poleetical meetin."

"That's no' a way to speak, wumman," says I; "whan a man has the richt to vote, he maun exerceese it for the guid o' the kintra; an' hoo can he dae that if he disna atten' the meetins on baith sides, an' hear what the candidates hae to say? I'll be gaun to the Tory meetin ane o' thae days, maist likely, an' what way should I no' gang to the Leeberal ane the nicht?"

"Weel," says she, "he that wull to Cupar

maun to Cupar. But see ye come straucht hame after it's by, an' no' let that deil's buckie An'ra Wabster wyle ye awa to the public hoose wi' him. It wad be better for him an' his bairns baith gin he put mair meat down their throats an' less drink doun his ain."

Weel, aff I gaed to the meetin, in company wi' An'ra Wabster an' Wullie Herkis an' Dave Dagleish; an' at the cross-roads we met in wi' Robbie Dodds frae Scraemuir an' Tam Arnott frae Wedderlairs; an' a bit further yont, at the end o' the Lang Plantin, Jock Sives the mole-catcher an' Adam Instant the dyker jined us. The election was on us by this time, an' an awfu' steer it had raised ower the haill kintra: ye heard naethin but the politics frae morning till nicht. In oor pairts, the question that a'body was speerin was whether Tod-Lowrie wad haud the seat or no'; an' frae the things they let drap, I could see that his ain supporters werena by ony means suir o't: they thocht he wad win in, but no' wi' ony votes to spare. It wasna that he had a popular candidate against him—a laird's son, he was: ane o' thae Tory kind that gae guisin aboot as Unionists, an' nae great shakes o' a speaker. An' it wasna Home Rule that the election was gaun to turn on, for the folk didna heed that muckle aboot it, either the tae way or the tither. It was the kirk that Tod-Lowrie had to battle wi', for, say what he likit, there were a gey wheen Leeb-

erals whae couldna see that disestaiblishment was to dae the kirk a heap o' guid, an' they said they wad either hae to vote for the Tory, or ens no' vote at a'. It was true that the Bill had taen effec' on some o' them, an' airted them roun' again, as I could make oot frae the things they said.

"It's a bonny bit o' legislation," says Tam Arnott; "the kintra hasna seen the like o't no' sin' the Reform Bill o' Thirty-Twa. After this, wha wull daur to say that Tod-Lowrie hasna the welfare o' the workin-classes at heart?"

"I dinna ken whether it wull be guid for the kirk," says Robbie Dodds, "but I ken it wull be guid for oorsels. An' a body has himsel to look to. If ye dinna look to yoursel, whae's gaun to dae't for ye?"

"What div *you* think o't, Jock Sives?" says An'ra Wabster to the mole-catcher; "you're no' gaun to vote Tory, are ye? You're no' like Jims here, wha has sae mony fikes an' whee-gees there's nae pleasin him. A body can reason wi' you. Ye see what ye're to get, set down in black an' white; an' it's noo or never, tak it or want it—I'm tellin ye."

"Ay, I see't," says Jock—he was ane o' your kind, Jock, that think twice afore they speak aince, an' wull no' pit oot their han' further nor they can draw it back—"ay, I see't," says he, "but I canna juist say that I hae riddled oot the

richts an' the wrangs o't in my ain mind. I canna get ower what the meenister has aye said til us, that the teinds belang the kirk, an' ye nicht juist as weel rin awa wi' the collection as help yoursel to the teinds."

"Are we no' tell't that Dauvid took the verra breid aff the altar," says Robbie Dodds, "an' naethin was ever said til him?"

"Ay, but we haena the same excüse," says he, "for we're no' perishin o' hunger."

"Ye needna come ower to me what the meenister says," says An'ra Wabster; "the meenister's juist gruppin a' he can for himsel. They're aye preachin til us no' to heed aboot this warld an' its gear, but they're unco guid at lookin after their ain; an' ye'll no' get me to believe that I haena the same richt as ony meenister to mak mysel as snug as I can the wee whilie I'm here."

"A' verra true," says Jock; "but ye ken hoo the teinds cam to be there? It was godly men lang syne that gied their lands an' siller to the kirk for the üse o' the folk in a' time comin; an' hae we ony richt to tak them awa frae future generations wha wull mebbe find the want o' them, an' turn roun' an' curse oor memories after we're a' deid an' gaen?"

"Let them care that come ahint," says An'ra; "we've got oorsels to look to, as Tam Arnott says. For my pairt, I mak nae fine professions, no' bein an elder. I'm juist a hungry tyke, an'

whan I see the bane hingin afore my nose I canna but gansh at it !”

“Weel,” says the mole-catcher, “if there’s mony o’ ye o’ the same mind, it’s awa wi’ the kirk : we’ll juist hae to spit an’ gie ower. But ye’ll mebbe find ye’re lossin mair nor ye’re gettin afore a’s düne. Mony a ane tines the half-merk whinger for the ha’penny whang.”

“Look here, Jims,” says Wullie Herkis to me, “ye’ve been sweein on the yett for a gey while, but ye’ll hae to jump either on the tae side or the tither noo. Ye canna mak but ae cross on the ballot-paper, ye ken, an’ we wad like to hear what ye mean to dae? Are ye gaun to vote for Tod-Lowrie, or are ye no’?”

“I haena made up my mind yet,” says I.

“Weel,” says he, “if that’s the way o’t, I’ll juist tell ye what Robbie an’ Adam an’ Dave here an’ a wheen mair o’ us were sayin the tither day. We hae aye coonted ye a faur-seein chiel, wha kent hoo mony lippies gae to the peck; an’ we hae socht your opeenion on the politics, an’ let oorsels be guidit in maist things by what ye said. But it’s plain that if ye canna mak up your ain mind, ye’ll no’ help us muckle to mak up oors. So we’ve laid oor heids thegither, an’ gaen ower the Bill for oorsels, an’ we hae come to a decesion wantin ye.”

“Ay?” says I; “an’ what micht your decesion be, Wullie?”

"We'll no' vote for the Tory," says he; "he's but a coof, ony way ye like to look at him."

"Ay," says Adam Instant, "he's a saft dud, yon; he has nae grup o' the politics ava."

"He's a puir weed," says Wullie; "an' it's a toom spüne he pits to oor mooth — no' a single sowp o' a' thae reforms we've been waitin for wull we ever get frae him. A' the maisters are for him, an' that's reason eneuch an' mair for us to gang the tither way. We no' want ony landlord to represent us; ye nicht juist as weel set the tod to herd the lambs."

"That's awfu' true," says Dave Da'gleish.

"But what about the kirk, Wullie?" says I; "did I no' hear ye say mysel that naethin wad tempt ye to vote for ony man wha wad pu' down the kirk?"

"An' whae's gaun to pu' down the kirk?" says he; "no' Tod-Lowrie. Man, hae ye no' read his Bill? D'ye mean to tell me the kirk wull come to an end for the want o' a puckle siller? Look at the Frees: if they're able to pay their meenisters, suirly oor folk can dae as muckle? An' we'll be a hantle better aff nor them, for we're to get the kirks an' manses for naethin. That's a' in the Bill."

"I hae aye understüde," says I, "that it took the Frees a' their time to mak ends meet, an' it was the big congregations in the touns that keepit up the wee anes in the kintra."

"An' what aboot that?" says he; "what's the odds whaur the siller comes frae, sae lang as it comes? The kirk wull tak nae scaith. An' see what we're to get—oor bit o' land an' oor plenishin; the verra things we hae been waitin an' wearyin on a' this time. Wad ye hae us loss the chance, an' mebbe no' see't again the langest day we live?"

"Ye needna speak to the elder, Wullie," says An'ra Wabster; "ye're juist wastin your wind. Jims has got to vote the way the wife tells him. It's the hen that does the crawin in Jims's roost."

"D'ye think sae?" says I; "weel, An'ra, if ye paid mair heed to your ain wife whiles, it might be better for baith the twa o' ye. My mistress ne'er needed to hide my buits, onyway, to keep me frae gaun to the public-hoose."

"Let's hae nae words amang frien's," says Adam Instant; "man, Jims, ye nicht ken An'ra Wabster better by this time nor tak ony notice o' his ill tongue."

"So ye nicht, Jims," says Tam Arnott; "an' as for what Wullie here was sayin, it seems to me unco sensible. It's a poleetical question, a' this aboot the kirk, let the meenisters say what they like. An' noo that the Leebicals hae taen it up, are ye gaun to split frae your pairty for juist this ae thing? are ye gaun to eat the coo an' worry on the tail? If ye dae, see whaur ye'll be. Your vote'll no' save the kirk, an' ye'll ha'

left your auld frien's—your brither pleuchmen—
an' gaen awa an' taen up wi' the tither side. I
no' say ye'll be boycotted, for Scots folk are no'
like thae Irish, bethankit. But ye canna expec'
to be coonted ane o' oorsels' like, if ye turn your
coat an' vote for the Tory."

XV

THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE

By this time we were gettin near Snawdon village, an no' muckle mair was said. I had my ain thochts, as I gaed into the meetin. It wasna pleesant to see Wullie Herkis an' Robbie Dodds an' Adam Instant, an' a' them wha had been üsed to seek my opeenion—ay, an' tak it, tae—gaun their ain gait, an' mindin me nae mair nor if I had been a last year's tattie-bogle. An' it wasna pleesant to hear that gin I didna vote the way they wanted I was to hae a mark set upon me, an' be amang them like a keel'd hog a' the rest o' my days. Naebody likes to ken that folk can dae fine wantin him, an' that he's to be set upon the bink, like a crackit dish, to be looked at an' nae mair. It's a' verra weel to hae the richt on your side, but for a' that a body disna relish bein left his lee lane. An' I wasna suir forby that I had the richt on my side: I micht be makin a mistake, juist as like as them.

I needna gae ower Tod-Lowrie's speech to ye, though I mind it fine. It was maist a' about his Bill, an' he proved til us, as plain as plain

could be, that the kirk was to loss next to nae-thin, an' we were to get a' we wanted. He said the meenisters had been movin heaven an' yirth to mak oot that this was a releegious question, but he no' thocht we were sic guffies as to be taen in wi' that. He didna blame them that muckle for grabbin their steepen's, for human natur was the same a' the warld ower, whether a man gaed aboot in a black coat an' a white tie or in clouted moleskins. But they had nae business to bring in the name o' releegion, an' trail it through the stour an' glaur o' a poleetical contest, an' that was what he blamed them for.

As for this bein a releegious question, the süner we got ony sic claivers oot o' oor heids the better. It was a question o' practical politics; mair nor that, the Tories had made it a question o' pairty politics; an' there was nae gettin ower the fac' that ony Leeberal wha voted Tory on accoont o' the kirk was juist a traitor to the Leeberal cause. It was ane o' the first principles—what he micht ca' the A B C—o' Leeberalism that ilka sheep should hing by its ain shank. They were pledged to dae awa wi' a' preevilege, an' hae nae mair makin fish o' ane an' flesh o' anither. Fine the Tories kent that gin the Establishment gaed, a heap mair things wad gang after't; an' that was what way they were makin sic a sang aboot the kirk. A' thae defence asso-

ciations were nae better nor Tory clubs, an' what they ca'd the Layman's League was juist the Primrose League under anither name. But we were ower auld birds to be caught wi' ony sic caff. We werena a wheen jeeglers wha had chip-pit oor shell yestreen. We had seen ower mony o' their dodges in oor time to let the Tories mak a hunt'-e-gowk o' us noo. The meenisters had düne their best to püshion oor minds against him, an' had gaen up an' down the coonty ca'in him for a'thing. Weel, he didna heed muckle for that, though he wondered whiles to himsel hoo men wha ca'd theirsels meenisters o' the gospel could lout sae low as to bear fause witness against their neebour. He thocht he kent himsel a wee bit better nor the meenisters kent him, an' he thocht we kent him better, tae; an' though mebbe he nichtna be as white as camstane, he wasna as black as coal coom. Onyway, he was content to leave himsel in oor han's, an' he expeckit a braw certeefficate o' character frae us on the pollin day.

There was an unco stampin an' thumpin whan Tod-Lowrie sat down, for a' but twa or three in the room were his ain supporters, an' there was nae dou't he had spoken extraordinar weel. For mysel, I clean forgot aboot bein an elder o' the kirk, I was that cairrit awa wi' what he had said, an' his way o' sayin't. It was like auld times to see him squarin up to the Tories, an' daurin them to come on; an' withoot ony thocht

o' what I was daein, I ruffed an' hooray'd him like the lave.

This gaed on for mebbe twa or three minutes, or aince they had got kind o' tired o' applaudin, an' the uproar begoud to gae doun. Syne I sees Pringle on the platform lookin hard my way, an' makin signs an' wavin to me wi' his han'; an' whan I no' took ony notice, but juist sat still, what does he dae but come to the front o' the platform, an' cry oot my name as lood as he could roar: **MAISTER INWICK!**

There was a deid silence, an' a'boday lookit first at Pringle, an' syne at me. I wad ha' gien a month's wages to ha' fand mysel on the tither side o' the door; I wushed wi' a' my heart I had düne as the wife wanted me, an' ne'er come nigh the meetin ava. It's queer hoo a body's mind works at times. I thocht I saw the inside o' my ain hoose up at Cauldshiel, an' Jess sittin wi' her feet on the fender, darnin my hose an' watchin the kettle bile, an' aye takin anither look at the auld aucht-day in the corner to see if it wasna time for my hame-comin, an' Fanny the wee doug cockin her ears at ilka soond oot-by, an' Jess sayin til her, "Houts, ye stüpid beast, ye nicht ken better; it's no' him yet!" I saw't a' like ane o' thae picturs they show ye wi' a lamp on a white claith: an' I wad fain ha' been hame at my ain fireside. But that wasna possible. I had run my heid into the hal-

ter, an' there was nae way I could see o' gettin't oot.

By this time they were a' cryin on me to rise. Ye never heard sic a noise a' your born days: it was "Inwick! Inwick!" "Come on, Jims, up wi' ye!" "Ca' your girr, man!" "Speech! Speech!" a' ower the ha'. Syne Peffers o' Scraemuir, wha was in the chair, got up—I saw Pringle whisperin to him what to say—an', "Order, order, gentlemen," says he; "oor frien' Jims Inwick has a motion to mak. He's aboot to propose a vote o' confidence in oor worthy member, Maister Tod-Lowrie!"

What was I to dae? Wi' them a' roarin my name fit to lift the roof, an' Pringle waggin to me in front, an' Tam Arnott an' An'ra Wabster shovin me ahint—up I got, no' kennin verra weel whether my heid or my heels was bûnemost. What a cheer they gied me!—ye nicht ha' heard it frae the faur end o' the toll green; an' I'll no' say but it gaed roun' my heart, an' inclined me mair for the job, to get sic a braw reception frae them a'; I wadna ha' believed I was that muckle thocht o'.

I couldna tell ye what I said, no' if ye paid me; an' whan I saw my speech prentit in the *Journal* I couldna believe it was mine, there was that muckle o't, an' it hung that weel thegither; I hae aye thocht the reporter laddie—a clever chiel he was—maun ha' made it up oot o' his ain

heid. Anyway, whatever I said, they appeared to be fine pleased wi't, for the ruffin whan I sat doun was eneuch to start the geists, an' the stour flew up in clouds an' set a'budy hoastin.

Syne Tod-Lowrie got up, an' made a bit speech. He thankit us frae the bottom o' his heart for the vote we had gien him. An' he thankit his frien' wha had proposed the vote in sic eloquent terms—that was what he said—his auld an' esteemed frien' Maister Inwick, wha was, he understide, a stoop o' the kirk, as weel as an ornament to the Leebetal pairty. That was suirly a proof, if ony proof was wanted, that his Bill had been drawn up in nae speerit o' hostility to the kirk. He felt confident there were plenty o' fair-minded, intelligent, an' independent men, like his frien' Maister Inwick, wha wadna be led by the nose by onybody, but wad think for their-sels an' dae what was richt; an' he coonted upon a sich to rally roun' him, an' save the constituency frae the disgrace o' bein representit by a Tory.

I canna tell ye hoo mony o' the chaps cam up to me, after the meetin was ower, an' gruppit me by the han', an' said I was the boy for them. Wullie Herkis an' Adam Instant an' Robbie Dodds—a' my ain neebours an' acquaintance—seemed unco pleased; they said they had ne'er had ony dou't but I wad come oot a' richt at the hinder end, an' keep the place I had aye had amang them. Pringle cam up to me, tae, an'

shook han's wi' me, unco free an' ceevil; an' said had he no' been richt in what he tell't me the day we had oor crack thegither, that aince I had seen the Bill an' heard oor member explain it I wad hae nae diffeeculty in makin up my mind what to dae? An' syne he took me awa wi' him up to the platform, an' I got a grup o' the han' frae Tod-Lowrie himsel, an' he said he was prood to hae my support, for it was men like me wha were the rig-bane o' the Leebereal pairty.

I wad ha' gaen awa fine pleased wi' mysel an' wi' a'budy else if it hadna been for Jock Sives the mole-catcher an' that camsteerie deevil An'ra Wabster. "I wush ye mayna ha' brocht an' ill kaim to your heid the nicht, Jims," says the mole-catcher, as we were gaun oot o' the ha'; "ye may be richt—I'll no' say—but it's a funny-like poseetion for an elder o' the kirk to be in, as I look at it." "Weel düne, elder!" says An'ra; "ye've been hingin fire for a gey while, but, my certy, ye gaed aff wi' a bang the nicht! Yon was a shot amang the doos, an' nae mistake! But ye'll no' need to let on to the wife, Jims: I don't she nicht hae a word or twa to say til ye gin she cam to hear o't."

They were keen for me to gang ower wi' them to Jenny Brockie's an' hae a weet afore takin the road, for it wanted half an hoor o' closin time. They said they wad stan' me as mony goes o' Jenny's best as I likit, an' syne we wad

a' gang hame thegither. But I said no, thank ye, an' stüde til't. I thoct I had mebbe düne eneuch for ae nicht, withoot feenishin it up in the public-hoose; so I left them, an' set aff hame my lane.

There was a dissle o' rain fa'in, an' the air had a fresh, cool feel about it, after comin oot o' the meetin, whaur we had been a' jammed thegither like herrin in a barrel, an' fair scomfist wi' the heat. There was naebody on the road forby mysel, an' no' a soond but the wind mirnin amang the firs, an' the owls in the Lang Plantin cryin to ane anither in their eerie way. I dinna ken hoo it was, but I begoud to see things different, noo that I was awa frae a' the noise an' steer. A body's no' the same whan he's ane o' a croud as whan he's traivellin a lanesome road at nicht a' by himsel. I had a kind o' feelin that mebbe I hadna düne richt after a'; an' whan I cam to think o't, Pringle had nae business to be roarin oot my name, for I had never said that I wad mak the motion, but juist that I wad see about it. It cam ower me that mebbe I had been made a füle o', an' at the same time that I wasna dealin verra fair wi' the wife if I keepit a' this back frae her. I kind o' thoct shame o' mysel—no' that there was ony reason for't, either—whan the door opened frae the inside afore I could draw the sneck, an' I saw Jess stan'in wi' the lamp in her han'.

"Eh, Jims," she says, "but I hae been thinkin lang or ye cam hame! Are ye a' by yoursel? Are nane o' the chaps wi' ye?"

"No," says I, "I left them a' doun by at Snawdon. They pressed me sair to gang ower to Jenny's wi' them, but I minded your words, guidwife, an' cam straucht awa."

"An' that was weel düne o' ye," says she, "an' faur wiser-like to be sittin at your ain ingle-neuk, nor gilravagin in public-hooses wi' the likes o' An'ra Wabster. An' noo ye'll draw aff your buits an' come in to the fire, an' I'll brew ye a gless o' somethin het, for I'm suir ye maun be tired. An' hoo did ye come on at your meetin?"

"Ou, fine," says I: an' thinks I to mysel, "Noo, wull I tell her?" But syne I refleckit that it wad be nae üse, for I couldna mak her understan' a' the oots an' ins o' the business. The weemen's minds were never made for followin a' the tirly-wirlies o' the politics, an' that's an argyment, in my opeenion, for no' giein them a vote. They maun aye rin brent at a thing; they haena the patience to gae roun' aboot it, an' look at it baith back an' front. They never see but ae side o' a question, an' whan ye tell them there's twa sides, they'll tell you that your een maun be gley'd. An' aince they hae taen a notion into their heids, ye'll no' drive it oot; richt or wrang, reason or nane, there it is,

an' there it wull bide. If I had tell't Jess what had passed at the meetin she wad maist likely ha' bleezed up in a rage, an' ca'd Pringle a cheatry body, an' me a puir silly goslin. So I said naethin aboot it, no' wantin to hae ony disagreement.

XVI

A MEETING OF SESSION

THIS was on the Wednesday, an' a' the rest o' the week I gaed aboot in a kind o' unsettled condeetion, no' bein at ease in my ain mind. Ilka nicht, whan I cam hame frae my wark, I expeckit to find that Jess had got word o' the opera doun by; but by guid luck naebody lat on to her, an', as I needna say, I was carefu' to keep wide o' the subjec' mysel.

Of coorse there was nae trüth in what An'ra Wabster said, that I wasna maister in my ain hoose. I kent better, an' so did the wife. It hadna been a' hinny an' jo wi' us; we had had oor bits o' cast-oots, whiles, like ither folk. But a' oor mairrit days we had ne'er had what ye micht ca' a sarious difference: no' that either o' the twa o' us had the upper-han' o' the tither, or socht it, but that we ettled to pu' thegither like ony sensible, weel-matched pair. In the maitter o' keepin the hoose, an' layin oot the siller, an' a' the like o' that, Jess had her ain way; she took chairge o' the bawbees, an' I never thocht o' interferin. But as for things ootside, sic as

the politics, she left me to gang my ain gait. She nicht pit in her word whiles, bein unco free wi' her tongue; but as for layin down the law to me, it was the last thing she wad ha' dreamt o'; she had ower muckle sense no' to ken that thae things maun be left to men bodies, an' the weemen hae nae business to mell wi' them. It wasna till this weary question o' the kirk cam up that there had been ony trouble atween us; in fac' it was the first time I had ever seen her show ony interest in what the papers ca' "topics o' the day."

On the Sunday mornin we gaed down to the kirk thegither, as we aye did. As sūne as the meenister gied oot his text, I kent fine what was comin. It was frae ane o' the wee prophets, an' unco kittle to fin'. I ken the way the buiks rin, no' to say perfec', but middlin weel; an' as faur yont as Dāniel I coont it what ye nicht ca' solid grund. But take me aff Dāniel an' set me amang thae wee prophets, an' it's mair or less a maitter o' chance wi' me whether I land at the bit or no'. Onyway the text was ane ye werena likely to forget, aince ye had heard it; it was: *Wull a man rob God?* Ye can jidge frae the text what the sermon was aboot: it was a nailer, an' nae mistake. He warmed us up that day, an' himsel into the bargain. He gar't the weemen greet an' the men grue; an' I saw puir Dave Da'gleish, wha was sittin in the pew afore me, shiverin an'

shakin like a man wi' the trem'lin aixies. To tell ye the trüth, I no' wanted muckle mair o't mysel, an' I wasna sorry whan he shut the Buik, gied oot the psalm, an' sat down.

There was to be a meetin o' session that day—I no' mind what aboot: naethin o' muckle consequence—an' after the kirk skail'd, I gaed awa roun' to the session-hoose, an' the wife set aff hame, leavin me to come after her. As süne as I got into the session-hoose I saw there was somethin brewin. The meenister shook han's wi' me, an' said hoo are ye, but kind o' stiff, I thocht; no' in his usual free way. An' Archie Howden shook han's wi' me; but as for Durie o' Bogha' an' Liddell o' Wedderlairs, they ne'er lat on they saw me. The twa o' them keepit their han's ahint their backs, an' stüde crackin thegither, an' wadna let their een rest on me, nae mair nor if I hadna been there.

Weel, the meenister constituted the meetin, but afore he could get ony further, Liddell brak in—ye could see he was in a Hielant passion, crinchin his teeth an' mutterin to himsel—an', "Moderawtor," says he, "afore we proceed to business I wad like to ask ye by what richt does that man"—pintin at me—"by what richt does that man sit here?"

I think I see the meenister's face yet, as he lookit first at Liddell an' syne at me. His broo got black an' his lips blae; but he sat as steady

as a rock, an' his vice shook nane. "I call you to order, Maister Liddell," he says; "that man sits here by the same richt as you or me. Let us gae on wi' oor business."

After this, as ye may weel believe, there wasna muckle attention gien to the business, an' the meenister didna keep us lang. At the kirk yett he left us stan'in, an' gaed awa ower to the manse; an' nae süner was his back tae us nor Liddell turned an' yokit on me like a teeger. He was an auld man, weel on in his seeventies; a muckle buirdly chiel he had been in his day, sax feet twa in his stockin soles, an' they say he could lift a tip an' fling it ower his shouther; but noo he was a' fa'n in an' cruppen thegither—juist a ruckle o' banes. It was kind o' grewsome to see an auld, gray-heidit man loss a' comman' o' himsel an' carry on like a body dementit—shakin like ane wi' the palsy, an' his runkled skin pu'in a' ways, an' his een lowin like gleids. I needna come ower what he said, but he abused me up hill an' doun dale, an' the names he ca'd me were mair fit for a cattle-close nor a kirk-yaird. He had a muckle crummie-staff in his han,' an' at ae time I thocht he was gaun to strike me wi't, he was in sic a blin' fury. I made ready to jink him, for I couldna ha' strucken him back: no' to speak o' the scawndal o't, the man was auld eneuch to be my faither.

Durie gruppit him by the airm, an' did his best to pácify him. "Come awa, Wedderlairs," he said; "ye hae gien him eneuch; leave the man alane."

"No," says he, "I haena gien him eneuch; it's a lounderin wi' my staff I wad ha' gien him gin I had been a score o' years younger an' we hadna been whaur we are! That's the man that ca's himsel an elder of the kirk, an' stan's up amang her enemies, an' leads the howl to ding her doun! That's ane o' your Leeberal Churchmen—the mawks that the kirk has bred in her belly, an' her no' deid! An' he has the face to come here, an' tak his seat in the session, rubbin shouthers wi' honest men—feegh! The verra sicht o' him scunners me!"

"Houts, Maister Liddell," says Archie, "ye're ower hard on Jims a'thegither. I grant ye he's made a mistake, but ye needna ca' him waur nor he is. It's no' ower late for him to tak back his arles to the tither side. He'll come a' richt yet, if ye let him a-be; but it's no' the way to grup a bird to fling your bannet at it!"

"I wonder to hear ye, Howden," says he; "wad ye hae the man sell his pairty, after sellin his kirk? Na, na; let him kythe in his ain colours, that folk may ken him. Little as I think o' him noo, I wad think even less o' him than—the dooble-dyed traitor!"

"Come awa, Wedderlairs," says Durie; "for

ony sake, come awa. Ye hae said eneuch. Nae need to jaw watter on a droun'd moose."

"A' richt, Durie," says he, "I'm comin. But if the man tak's my coonsel he'll keep oot o' my sicht. If he bides in the session, I leave it. But he may ha' some shame left aboot him somewhere, an' if he has, he'll no' thrust himsel amang us here ony mair. We want nae scabbit sheep in oor hirsell!" An' wi' that the twa o' them gaed awa thegither, doun to the inn stables, an' left us stan'in.

My breath was fair taen awa wi' the way he had opened oot upon me, an' I gaed doun the street alang wi' Archie Howden, no' able yet to tak it a' in.

"Weel, Jims," says Archie, after a bit, "ye've got your fairin the day, an' I maun say I think ye're cheap o't."

"What div ye mean?" says I; "d'ye think I fash my heid for what an auld doitit carle like yon says? A'body kens Liddell o' Wedderlairs, an' naebody heeds him. He's juist ane o' the bitterest Tories that's gaun."

"Na, na," says he, "that'll no' dae. Ye'll no' get leave to ride aff on that horse, Jims. I dinna approve o' a' he said, but ye ken fine he wasna thinkin o' the politics: he was thinkin o' the kirk, an' naethin else. An' there's plenty mair o' us feel every bit as keen aboot it as auld Wedderlairs, though we dinna use the same kind o'

language. My word, yon was a proper dressin he gied ye!—an', as I said afore, I canna but think it served ye richt."

"Ye may think what ye like for me, Archie," says I, "but ye'll no' see me at ony mair o' your session meetins. Liddell needna be feared. I'm no' gaun back yonder to get naethin but ill tongue."

"Weel," says he, "after what ye've düne, an' if ye mean to carry on as ye've begun, I think ye micht mebbe be better to bide awa. Ye micht find yoursel kind o' oot o' place on the session. I hae heard a sough aboot your trokins wi' Pringle, Jims."

"Ay?" says I; "an' whae micht ye ha' heard that frae?"

"Oh, it's nae secret," says he; "Wullie Herkis an' Dave Da'gleish watched ye gang into his office, an' a body disna need to be a spaeman to pit twa an' twa thegither. Weel, for a man that prides himsel on haein mair wit nor ither folk, ye walkit into the trap unco simple, I maun say."

"What div ye mean?" says I; "what's that ye're sayin aboot a trap, I wad like to ken?"

"Weel, Jims," says he, "I'll tell ye, an' mind, I'm speakin to ye as a frien'. They wanted your vote, nae dou't; but ae vote wadna ha' been eneuch to seat Tod-Lowrie in the saiddle. An' that was what way they got a haud o' ye to propose the vote at the meetin—no' because ye are

Jims Inwick, pleuchman, but because ye are Jims Inwick, elder o' the kirk. An' noo it's bein tootit ower a' the coonty that Tod-Lowrie has the office-bearers o' the kirk for him, and that the kirk folk themsels hae nae objection to his Bill; an' your motion wull turn mebbe saxty or a hunder votes—no' because ye are onybody worth speakin o' yoursel, but because ye are what the kirk has made ye. Ye've been a rare decoy-deuk to them, Jims, an' that's the truth!"

"Naethin o' the kind!" says I; "I dinna believe a single word o' what ye're sayin!" But a' the same I had my dou'ts; there was nae denyin that the way he put it was gey like the thing, an' it gar't me feel middlin queer.

"Believe it or no', it's as I say," says he. "Man, they hae taen the measure o' your fit brawly! Hoo is't ye canna see it for yoursel? Ye've been in the gled's claws, an' they hae pluckit ye clean! Ye've been made game o' by that tricky body Pringle—the la'yer has been ane ower mony for ye, Jims, clever as ye think yoursel. Ye've been in his han's like a bairn's Souple Tam—he has pu'd the strings, an' gar't ye jump ony gait he wanted. An' as for this Bill that ye're a' sae built up aboot—"

"Noo, Archie," says I, "let the Bill alane. I ken mair aboot it nor you, for I hae heard Tod-Lowrie explain it. The Bill's a guid Bill, an' if the kirk disna tak it an' mak the best o't, she'll

get waur terms at the hinder end. So a'body says that kens onythin aboot it."

"So that's what they're sayin, is't?" says he. "Weel, let waur come upon ill's back, if sae it maun be. But I'll tell ye what Tod-Lowrie's daein wi' this Bill o' his: he's juist creishin your loof, neither less nor mair. Hech me, but we live in queer times an' under droll laws! They hae legislated plenty aboot what they ca' corrup' practices; an' if a man stan's ye a nip, or sends ye his phottygraph, or gies ye a hurl in a hired machine, he losses his seat. But as lang as ye bribe wi' ither folk's siller, an' no' your ain, ye're a' richt, an' the law canna touch ye. That's aboot what it comes til, as I look at it."

"Ye hae nae richt to say that," says I; Tod-Lowrie's as honest a man as ony o' your Tories, that wull dae naethin for the workin folk or aince they are driven til't at the pint o' the graip, an' syne tak it doun like soor dook, an' mak believe to like it."

"I'm no' gaun to quarrel wi' ye, Jims," says he, "an' I'm no' wantin to argy aboot politics the day. I can see fine hoo it is. Ye're a' after this Bill o' Tod-Lowrie's, like flees to the hinny-pig—I wush ye may ever get a lick o't! An' as for your ain conduc', tak this frae a man's that's aulder than yoursel: ye canna sair twa maisters. Ye canna ettle to sit on twa stüles, withoot landin on the fluir atween them. Ye've been tryin it

on, Jims, an' a sair tummle it has cost ye! Mind, I'm sayin this to ye oot o' kindness."

"I think mair o' your kindness nor it's a' worth," says I.

"Ye needna tak it ill oot," says he; "faithfu', ye ken, are the woun's o' a frien'. This has been a bad business for ye, Jims, my man. Ye'll rue it but aince, an' that wull be aye!"

"I'll say guid-bye wi' ye the noo," says I; "it's time I was awa hame."

"Ay," says he, "gang your ways hame, Jims; ye couldna dae better. Ye'll get your kail through the reek the day, or I'm cheated."

"What div ye mean by that?" says I.

"Ou, nae hairm," says he; "but I saw your wife gaun by the kirk yett wi' some o' the neebours, an' I heard what they were sayin til her. They appear'd to be tellin her a' about the gran' speech ye made at Tod-Lowrie's meetin."

XVII

A TONGUE WITH A TANG

AFTER hearin this I set aff hame, feelin onythin but comfortable; an' whan I got up to Cauldshiel, as süne as I had crossed the doorstap, I saw what it was gaun to be. The table was set an' the denner cookin on the fire; but, insteid o' Jess steerin aboot the hoose in her üsual cheery way, there she was, sittin on her creepie stüle at the chimley corner, wi' her apron flung ower her heid, an' greetin like to break her heart.

I mind my auld faither had a sayin: It's nae mair to see a wumman greet nor to see a güse gae barefit. It's a' verra fine to say sic things; but whan the wumman's your wife, an' whan she has been a guid wife to ye forby, an' whan ye're no' a'thegither suir that ye're free o' blame for vexin her, it maks an unco difference. Nae dou't wi' the maist feck o' the weemen folk it disna need muckle to bring the watter to their een; but Jess wasna ane o' your greetin kind, an' it was nae trifle, ye micht be suir, that gar't her tak to her pocket-näpkin.

She no' took ony notice o' me whan I cam in,

an' I stude lookin at her for a while, gey troubled in my ain mind. It's an awfu'-like thing to cast oot wi' your wife; for what's a body to dae if he hasna peace at hame, an' sees naethin but cross looks an' hears naethin but flytin at his ain fireside? I could ha' wushed Tod-Lowrie an' his Bill, an' Pringle an' his fair-ca'in tongue, an' the haill Leebereal pairty, at the bottom o' the sea.

"Jess," I says to her after a bit, "Jess, my wumman, what ails ye?" But she never lat on she heard me, nor took the apron aff her heid. I wad raither ha' been face to face wi' auld Wedderlairs, an' him shakin his staff at me an' ca'in me for a' the rascals that ever were, nor ha' seen the wife sittin greetin like that. It wasna like her, no' haein a word to say.

"Jess," I says to her again, "ye micht speak to a body. What's vexin ye? Tell us a' aboot it, wumman." But no, she wadna speak: there she sat, rockin hersel back an' forrat, an' as ony-body could see, sair fashed in her mind.

"Jess," I says to her at last, gey near the end o' my wits, "am I no' to get ony denner the day? Ye micht gie a body his denner."

That brocht her to hersel. Up she got, an' took the brat aff her heid, an' I could see that her een were unco red, an' her face was a' begrutten. "Ou, ay, ye'll get your denner," says she; an' withoot ony mair words she whups the

lid aff the pat, an' dishes the kail an' sets it on the table.

It was a puir meal we made atween us. I hadna my usual guid gae-doun, an' as for Jess, she juist made a show o' eatin, an' sat an' ploutered wi' her spüene. After we were düne, "See here, guid wife," I says til her, "this 'll no' dae. What hae they been sayin to ye doun by that's put ye that muckle aboot ye canna tak your denner?"

"I hae heard that said to me the day, Jims," says she, "that has sent me hame wi' a sair heart. To think that my faither was an elder o' the kirk for forty year in the pairish o' Lempockshaws, an' his faither afore him for hoo lang I dinna ken, an' me to hear the day that my man has turned against the kirk, an' set tae his han' to pu' her doun!"

"Houts, wumman," says I, "that's no' the way o't ava. Ye maunna believe a' ye hear doun by. A' cracks are no' to be trowed."

"Little did I think"—on she gaed as if she hadna heard me—"whan I set aff to the kirk wi' ye this mornin, an' sat aside ye hearin the sermon, that a' the time ye were ane o' thae verra robbers an' spilers o' the sanctuary that the meenister was speakin o'! It was ill düne o' ye, Jims, no' to tell me the truth. I thocht I could lippen to ye. I thocht whan we put oor names to yon paper at the meetin, it meant that ye were gaun

to vote against them that wad tak awa oor kirk frae us—”

“Naethin o’ the kind!” says I; “there was naethin about votin in the paper!”

“An’ insteid o’ that,” says she, “by what I hear, ye’ve been speakin for them, an ye’re gaun to vote for them. Ye nicht ha’ been mair honest wi’ your wife, suirly.”

“There’s nae dou’t I should ha’ tell’t ye, Jess,” says I; “it was a faut, an’ I’ll no’ hide it. But I did it wi’ the best intentions. I was feared ye nichtna understan’ my poseetion, an’ that was what way I said naethin at the time.”

“An’ what’n kind o’ a poseetion are ye in,” says she, gettin mair speerity-like, “that ye canna mak it plain to your wife? I’m no’ withoot some wits, for a’ I’m a wumman; an’ I’ll tak on han’ to tell ye what your poseetion is, if ye canna dae’t for yoursel. Your poseetion is that ye’re gaun to vote for Tod-Lowrie, an’ Tod-Lowrie’s gaun to whummle down the kirk.”

“That’s no’ it ava!” says I. “It’s juist as I said—the way wi’ a’ the weemen: they’re aye in sic a hurry they’ll rather guess the length o’ the piece nor fash to bring oot the tape an’ measure it. Tod-Lowrie’s no’ gaun to hairm the kirk. If his Bill wan through the morn, the kirk wad gae on the same as it’s daein the noo. Naebody wad be a preen the waur, an’ a wheen o’ us wad be a heap the better.”

"An' if that's true," says she, "can ye tell me what way the meenister—"

"Ou, the meenister!" says I. "Noo, Jess, ye maunna lippen ower muckle to what the meenister says—I mean whan he gets on to this kirk business. He's sensible eneuch aboot ither things, I grant ye. A' yon aboot robbin the sanctuary is nae mair nor a blast o' words; it has a braw soond, but it no' means muckle. Noo, look here—lay your mind to what I'm sayin—an' I'll mak it plain to ye. Supposin Jude Punton's mill was my property, an' supposin I gaed down to Jude some mornin an' said til him, 'Jude, I'm wantin the mill for mysel; you clear oot o' here in dooble quick time'—weel, that wad be the north side o' fair play. But supposin I gaed to the miller an' said til him, 'Jude, I'm gaun to mak ye a present o' the mill; frae this day it wull be a' your ain, stanes, hopper, an' wheel, stan'in graith an' gangin graith: a' I'm gaun to dae is to cut aff your watter, but I'll show ye whaur to rin anither lade, that wull gie ye dooble the poo'r ye hae the noo'—there wad be nae ill-üsage there, wad there?"

"No," says she, "I canna see he wad hae ony reason to complain."

"Weel," says I, "that's exac'ly what we're gaun to dae wi' the kirk. The meenisters are to keep their kirks an' manses an' gairdens,

an' a' that's taen frae them is the steepen' an' the glebe."

"An' syne hoo are the bodies to live?" says she.

"Aff the free-will offerins o' the folk they preach til," says I.

"Then Lord peety them!" says she; "hoo muckle o' a collection had ye the day, Jims? There was naethin but bawbees in the ladle whan it gaed by me, but mebbe the white money was put in after. Free-will offerins? Haud your tongue! If that's a' the pay they're to get they'll no' be muckle made up wi't! They'll no' fatten ower quick on oor han's, puir cratur's!"

"Juist as I said!" says I; "I kent hoo it wad be. Nae maitter hoo plain ye mak it, ye'll no' ding sense into the heid o' a wilfu' wumman!"

"Ay?" says she—she was faur past the greetin stage noo, an' gettin on to her high horse—"ye think a wumman has nae sense, div ye? Ye think we're born withoot een in oor heids, an' ony lee's guid eneuch to cheat us? I can see through you, onyway, Jims, my man, an' ye needna try to come ower me wi' ony o' the trash that ye bring awa wi' ye frae your poleetical meetins! Jude Punton's mill's no' your property, an' nae mair are the steepen's an' glebes; an' if ye lay han's on a saxpence that belongs the kirk, you may ca't what ye like, but I ca't thievin!"

"It's naethin o' the kind," says I; "it's oor ain, to dae what we like wi'."

"It's no' your ain," says she, "an' fine ye ken it. That's what Pringle the la'yer tell't ye—ou, ay, I hae heard a' aboot the paction him an' you made atween ye! A bonny man you, to cast up to ony wumman that she hasna her wits about her! I hae wit eneuch to see through a blichan o' a la'yer, onyway! Neither Pringle nor ony ither la'yer wad ha' turned *me* inside oot, like a flyped stockin! To hear ye, a body micht think ye had been brocht up in a knife-box, ye're that shairp—an' yet ye wad let a cratur like Pringle tak ye in, an' flatter ye up to the nines, an' lay saut to your tail! Man, I think shame o' ye! To gang an' sell your kirk for a dram!"

"It's a lee!" says I; "a maist notor'ous lee, I dinna care whae tell't ye!"

"An' you an elder!" she gaes on, no' heedin me. "Eh, hoo prood I was yon day ye were ordained! An' ilka time I saw ye takin roun' the ladle, or gaun in to the session-hoose, or sittin up beside the meenister at Sacrament times, wi' your bonny white collar an' tie that I had bleached an' stairched for ye mysel—eh, but my heart was füll to think that my man was an elder o' the kirk! An' noo, what hae ye düne? Ye hae made yoursel a byword in the pairish! Ye hae lowered yoursel as low as Esau, wha

sell't his birthright for a bowl o' brose! Ye hae made me think shame to cross the door-stap o' the hoose o' prayer whaur we were kirked thegither, whaur a' oor weans were kirsened, and whaur I hae worshipped wi' ye for four-an'-thretty year!"

"Wumman," says I, pitin on a fearsome coontenance, "hae a care! Tak thocht what ye're sayin! Mind what's written in the Buik: 'Rebuke not an elder'—first Timothy fifth and first!"

"You an elder!" says she. "A bonny-like elder! I'll gae oot to the roads an' find a better elder nor you at ony dyke-side. I'll tak the first cadger I come to, an' he'll be mair worthier o' the office nor you! Leave Timothy alane—a man wha wad disestaiblish the kirk has nae business to be comin ower what's written in the Bible!"

That was the way she cairrit on, an' what was the use o' me speakin? She had fairly taen the bit in her teeth an' startit aff, an' there was nae man leevin could ha' stoppit her. As my auld faither used to say, Ye may drive the deil into a wife, but ye'll never ding him oot o' her. The best I could dae was to win as quick as I could to the tither side o' the door.

At the back o' the steadin I fand An'ra Wabster, sittin on the tap o' the flakes, smokin his pipe, an' watchin Ecky Blair the herd, wha was

thrang cuttin neeps for his sheep. He made room for me to sit down aside him, an' I got oot my pipe an' lichted it; an' after I had taen twa-three draws I begoud to feel mair composed like.

"It's fine growthy wather, Jims," says An'ra, after a bit.

"Ay," says I, "there's no' muckle faut to fin' wi' the wather the noo."

"But I canna help thinkin," says he, "there's a kind o' feelin o' thunder in the air the day—what the papers ca' 'disturbed condeetions,' ye ken. Are ye no' sensible o't, Jims?"

I lookit at An'ra, an' I thocht I saw him gie a wink in the direction o' Ecky Blair. But whether he meant it for impidence, or was juist passin the remark, I couldna be suir.

XVIII

IN THE POLLING BOOTH

THE election got aye the nearer. I'm no' gaun to rehearse to ye a' I gaed through thae weary weeks: I hae nae wush to ca' it back to mind. Jess said nae mair on the subjec', for she wasna ane o' the canglin kind; aince she had got her say oot, she was düne wi't. But I could see it was maist aye in her thochts, an' whiles I caught her takin a bit greet to hersel whan she no' jaloused I was watchin her. An' syne I got into an awfu' rage at Pringle, an' the ill trick he had played me, for ye could ca' it naethin else.

I couldna gae back on what I had düne without makin a muckle füle o' mysel. Folk wad ha' said that Jims Inwick was a puir, feckless, harum-scarum cratur, wi' nae mair stabeelity nor a weather-cock. That was what Tam Arnott, an' An'ra Wabster, an' the rest o' them were aye threepin to me; they said I wad loss a' credit wi' the tae side, an' no' win ony wi' the tither, if I didna ack up to what I had said in public. An' I minded that auld Liddell o' Wedderlairs had tell't me the same thing.

There was juist ae way oot o' the mess that I could see, an' that was no' to vote at a'. It gaed sair against the grain wi' me to stan oot o' the fecht, an' no' to hae my share in the work o' governin the nation. But whan I saw the wife gaun through the hoose lookin sae cuist doun an' speeritless, it gar't me seek aboot for what I could dae to please her. I no' said a word to onybody, but as guid as made up my mind that whan the pollin day cam I wad bide at hame.

Weel, the pollin day cam, an' Britherston gied us leave to lowse twa hoors afore oor time, at four o'clock. The chaps were a' in an unco hurry to get their horse sorted, an' themsels cleaned up, an' be aff doun by to vote an' see the fun.

"Are ye no' ready yet, Jims?" An'ra Wabster cries in to me as he gaed by the door. "Come on, man; ye'll miss the best o't if ye're no' quick."

"No," says I, "I'm no' ready yet, An'ra. Ye needna wait on me. I'm juist sittin doun to my tea."

I heard them a' gae aff thegither, crackin an lauchin, an' in unco speerits, for an election disna come roun' that aften, an' it's a rare ploy whan it comes. Syne, after we had had oor tea, I gaed ootby, an' took a bit turn roun' the mains. There wasna a body aboot the place, an' no' a soond but the horses stampin in the stable an' the kye

moo in the byre. I felt kind o' dowie an' no' like mysel. An' whan I thocht o' a' the steer an' the on-gauns at Snawdon, an' the chaps a' troopin in to vote, an' the bills on the wa's, an' the croud at the toun cross, an' the meetin in wi' auld acquaintance, an' the daffin an' cheerin, I was sair temptit to tak a daunder doun, an' hae a glisk o't. I said to mysel that I didna need to vote; I wad juist stan' an' look on. So I tell't the wife I wadna be late o' comin hame, an' aff I gaed.

Doun by, I met in wi' a heap o' chaps I was acquent wi', frae the fairm touns roun' aboot. They were a' for Tod-Lowrie, an' they said his voters were coming forrat fine. The Tories had maist a' polled in the fore pairt o' the day, an' they had been coonted; an' wi' Snawdon bein the pollin place for three pairishes, it was possible to hae a notion o' hoo the thing wad gang. There was little dou't that Tod-Lowrie wad win in.

The time I was hearin their news an' crackin ower election prospec's wi' them my steps were aye takin me in the direction o' the public schule, whaur the pollin was gaun on. An' the nearer I got to the place the mair it took haud o' me that I büde to gae in. I canna tell ye hoo it was, but that was the kind o' feelin that cam ower me—that it wad be a bairnly-like thing, an' a coowardly-like thing forby, no' to gae in wi'

the lave, an' record my vote either on the tae side or the tither. Ye can respec' a man wha tak's the wrang side, sae lang as he believes it richt; but hoo can ye respec' a man wha refuses to tak ony side, either because he hasna the spunk to stan' forrat an' say what he thinks, or because he hasna the sense to ken his ain mind? In a' the contests afore this ane I had düne my pairt an' taen my share; an' noo I was like the war-horse that we're tell't aboot in the Buik o' Job, that smells the battle afaur aff, an' hears the shoutin an' the horns blawin, an', pu' as ye like, ye canna haud the beas' back—he maun be in to the thick o't!

Whan we got up to the schule, the first I saw amang the croud at the door were the verra twa I wad raither no' ha' seen—Archie Howden an' Pringle the writer. They baith cam up an' shook han's wi' me, an' askit me hoo was I, an' hoo was the wife. Syne Archie says to me,

“Ye're gaun in to vote, Jims, an' I hope for your ain sake, as weel as ithers', that ye'll be guidit richt. There hasna been sic anither day as this for auld Scotland, no' in three hunder years. Ye're at the pairtin o' the ways. Ye're like Balaam's cuddy—ye're in a narrow place, whaur there's nae turnin. Dinna let yoursel be cheated wi' a wheen words an' names. It's no' a question o' Whig or Tory the day. It's a question o' kirk or nae kirk, an' the haill future o'

the folk o' this kintra hings on the way ye answer it—you, an' the likes o' you."

"Maister Inwick has aye been on the side o' progress," says Pringle; "an' noo that his pairty's on the eve o' a glorious victory, that wull pit the crown to the wark o' saxty years, an' gie the labourin folk o' this kintra a' they've been seekin for—it's no' likely he'll turn tail at the eleventh hoor, an' gang an' vote for ane o' his naiteral enemies!"

"Progress!" says Archie; "ay, that's ane o' your rants. Naiteral enemies! That's hoo ye saw ill-wull atween class an' class o' the community. Dinna let yoursel be taen in wi' ony sic püshionous nonsense, Jims. Think for yoursel. There's twa kinds o' progress in this world, an' ane o' the twa wull bring ye unco low down. Mind what ye heard frae the minister: 'Wull a man rob God?' "

"Come, come, Maister Howden," says Pringle; "nae tamperin wi' the voters! Nae intimidation!"

"Come, come, Maister Pringle," says Archie; "nae tamperin yourself! nae treatin!" An' wi' that Pringle sheered aff gey quick, as if he hadna gotten the best o't; an' I gaed awa into the schule.

Weel, I gied the man my name, an' he gied me my paper, an' syne I gaed awa into ane o' the places they had parteetioned aff for the folk

votin. I canna tell ye hoo lang I stüde lookin at the paper, wi' the stump o' a leid pencil in my han', in a dreidfu' state o' mind. There I saw the twa names afore me: the name o' the man I had aye voted for, wha spak a' my thochts, an' kent a' my wants, an' the name o' the man I caredna the wag o' a sheep's tail for, the laird's son, whase interests were a' the direc' opposite o' my ain. First I put the cross at Tod-Lowrie's name—in the air; an' syne I heard the meen-ister's vice cryin into my lug, "Wull a man rob God? Your faithers gied the best bluid in their veins for the Kirk o' Scotland, an' wull you no gie her your votes?" Syne I put the cross at the tither name—aye in the air; an' I thocht I heard Tam Arnott sayin, "Hae nae mair a-dae wi' Jims Inwick! He's a lost man. He's gaen an' voted for a Tory!" Wi' that I back again, an' was on the pint o' markin the paper for Tod-Lowrie, whan I heard as if it was Jess whisperin to me, "Eh, Jims, ye'll suirly no' vote for them wha wad tak awa oor kirk frae us? An' you an elder, an' me sae prood o' ye!" Lordsake, thinks I, this is no' canny! There maun be ghaists aboot! An' I was gaun to pit the cross at the Tory chiel's name, whan a' at aince it cam to my mind what Pringle had said: "He'll no' turn tail at the eleeventh hoor, an' vote for his naiteral enemy!" That brocht me to a deid stop, an' I was at my wits' end what to dae. I no' mind

ownin to ye, I was in a maist peetiabie condeetion. I thocht my heid wad gae in twa, an' the sweat brak on me; I canna think o't yet without a kind o' groosin comin ower me.

Syne I heard the man that gies oot the papers—the pollin clerk, or whatever they ca' him—speakin to Duncan Fraser the polissman, wha was inside the booth. "Officer," says he, "gang an' see what that man's daein wi' himsel ower there. He's been in that box the best pairt o' ten meenutes, an' there's folk waitin. Ask him if he's spil't his paper, or fa'n asleep, or what."

Wi' that I heard Duncan's muckle feet comin trampin ower the fluir to whaur I was stan'in, an' thinks I to mysel, "Doun wi' your cross, Jims. Ye canna stan' switherin here a' nicht. Whatever ye dae, there'll be somebody to fin' faut wi' ye an' mak your life a burden; dree oot the inch whan ye've tholed the span, an' be düne wi't!" So juist as the polissman cam up to me, I scarted doun my cross whaur I had aye been üsed to pit it—against Tod-Lowrie's name; an' folded the paper, an' took it ower to the clerk's table.

"Ye're suirly new to the votin," says he, as I drappit the paper in the box; "ye've taen an awfu' time to mak your cross, man!"

"No," says I, "I'm no' juist a'thegither new til't. But I'm no verra gleg at thae kind o' jobs."

There maun ha' been somethin queer about my

looks whan I cam oot—An'ra Wabster tell't me after that I had a' the appearance o' a chow'd moose—for they a' seemed to mak suir that I hadna voted the richt way, as they coonted it.

“So ye've gaen an' voted for the destroyer o' your kirk!” says Archie Howden, mair raised-like nor I had ever seen him; “ye've bit the han' that has fed ye, like an ill-condeetioned cur! Ye're nae mair a frien' o' mine, Jims! I'll hae nae dealins wi' a man wha has brocht disgrace upon the eldership, an' betrayed the kirk o' his faithers!”

“So ye've voted Tory!” says An'ra Wabster; “ye hae left your auld billies—ye hae separated yoursel frae your ain flesh an' bluid—to draw up wi' the lairds an' maisters! Weel, we're düne wi' ye, Jims. We'll weesh oor han's o' ye. Keep ony kind o' company ye like, but ye needna seek oors!”

“Gentlemen, gentlemen!” says Pringle; “respec' the secrecy o' the ballot! Leave Maister Inwick alane. I hae nae dou't he has voted accordin to his conscience an' his convictions, an' nane o' us has ony business to question him.”

But I saw fine I was gaun to be in bad breid wi' baith sides, if I didna let them ken what way I had voted. So I ups and says to them,

“I'm no' ashamed o' what I hae düne, an' I'm no' feared to tell ye whae I hae voted for, ballot or nae ballot. I hae voted for oor auld member,

Maister Tod-Lowrie—a guid Leebéral, an’ a true frien’ o’ the workin folk!”

At this Archie Howden turned his back on me, an’ gaed awa withoot anither word. But An’ra Wabster cried “Hooray!” an’ gruppit me by the han’.

“Weel düne, Jims!” he says; “I aye said ye wad turn up heids, whan it cam to the bit! An’ noo ye maun awa wi’ me to Jenny’s: the rest o’ the chaps are a’ there by this time, an’ they’ll be blythe to see ye, an’ to hear that ye hae voted richt, after a’! . . . Ou, ye needna be in twa minds aboot comin”—I was kind o’ hingin back, like, an’ him pu’in me by the airm—“ye’re as guid as düne wi’ the session noo, an’ as for the wife, ye’ll get a hearin frae her onyway. As weel be hanged for a sheep as a lamb!”

I thocht there was some sense in what he said, an’ I felt the want o’ a dram gey bad; so I no’ raised ony mair objections, but gaed awa wi’ him.

XIX

DIVIDING THE SPOIL

WHAT a roar o' walcome they gied me whan I gaed into Jenny's! The place was packed as fu' as it could haud, an' ye could scarce see across it for tobaccy reek, or hear yoursel speakin for the noise o' sae mony tongues a' gaun at aince. Somebody cries oot, "It's never Jims, is't? It's no' the elder? Weel, that coves a'!" An' An'ra says, "Ay, it's him, suir eneuch; an' he's a' richt, lads—he's voted for Tod-Lowrie!" At this they a' gied a hooray, an' a'budy wanted to shake han's wi' me, an' stan' me somethin to drink. It was, "Come awa in by, Jims; man, ye hae been an awfu' strainger!" "Here's room for ye, elder, yont here; man, a sicht o' you's guid for sair een!" "Man, Jims, ye maun hae a fell drouth! Come awa, an' see if we canna slocken ye!" "Come ower to your auld place, Jims, an' crook your hough, an' say what ye'll tak!" They were a' that pleased to see me back amang them, an' to hear I hadna voted for the Tory after a', that they couldna mak eneuch o' me. "Here's to the company!"

says I, takin doun my gless, an' feelin a heap the better o't.

Syne they begoud to crack aboot the election, an' hoo it was like to gang. They a' thocht the Leeberals wad hae a big majority, an' we nicht look for some braw legislation inside the next twa years. They askit me my opeenion, an' I said, as faur as I could mak oot the signs o' the times, that the workin folk had the whup han' noo; an' if they agreed amang theirsels, there was nae reform on the list they wad need to ask for twice. I said this was an age o' democracy, an' baith land an' capital wad ken an awfu' odds frae the days whan they got leave to ride on the riggin, an' dae exac'ly what they likit.

"The first bill they tak up," says An'ra Wabster, "maun be Disestaiblishment. They maun tak it up at aince, an' ca' it through."

"I'm no' sae suir o' that, An'ra," says Dan Preacher the miller's man; "there's a wheen ither things we want fülly mair nor Disestaiblishment. The kirk's no' daein ony great hairm, an' though it wull hae to gang, nae dou't, there are ither reforms that seem to me mair pressin, sic as the land."

"Man, Dan," says An'ra, "div ye no' see that if we mak a beginnin wi' the kirk a' the rest wull come in its ain time, an' that afore lang? If ye tak awa the meenister's glebe frae him, div

ye think the laird wull get leave to keep his gress parks an' his policies? Ye might see, if ye had a heid on your shouthers an' no' a fozy peat, that the tae thing leads to the tither. Am I no' richt, Jims?" he says to me.

"Perfectly richt, An'ra," says I; "an' that's what way the lairds hae been fechtin tith an' nail for the kirk, though there's no' mony o' them ever crosses its doors."

"What a gran' time it wull be, lads," says An'ra, "whan a' thae reforms are cairrit! Ye'll hae to licht a muckle bonfire that day on the tap o' the Whaup Law! What a gran' thing whan ye get your sma' holdins oot o' the laird's land, an' the siller to stock them oot o' the teinds! Weel, we hae slaved plenty for bit an' brat, an' it's but richt that we should hae a taste o' something better afore we dee!"

"That's weel said, An'ra," says Tam Arnott; "the Tories may ca' it robbery, or what they please, but I ca' it justice. We're no' like thae chaps that gae aboot flingin bomb-shells an' blawin folk up—what is't ye ca' them, Jims?"

"Ankerists," says I.

"Ay, Ankerists," says he. "Weel, we're no' like them; we're dacent, quait, hard-workin folk; but we mean to hae oor richts, a' the same! My forebears were here afore the laird's. There's ten generations o' Arnotts lyin, some o' them here in Snawdon, an' some in the tither

kirk-yairds roun' aboot. An' I'm saxty-twa year auld, an' to say that I haena as muckle as a hen's gress to ca' my ain!—an' the laird wi' the maitter o' forty to fifty thoosand acre! Is that jüstice? Is that a fair diveesion? Is that the kind o' thing we're gaun to pit up wi', noo that we hae the government o' this kintra is our ain han's?"

"No' likely," says An'ra; "dinna pit yoursel aboot, Tam—ye'll get your ain in the guid time that's comin. An' there's a wheen tidy bits o' fields, forby the glebe, lyin fine an' handy to the village here. A body micht hae his hoose in the village, an' no' ower faur to traivel to his wark; an' it wad be mair cheerier nor bidin a' by yoursel up at the hill fits. We'll hae to be thinkin hoo we'll pairt them amang us, lads, aince the Bill wins through."

"I'll hae Over Fauld an' Nether Fauld," says Tam Arnott; "I hae aye had an unco notion o' thae twa fields."

"A' richt," says An'ra, "we'll coont them yours. An' what micht you ha' cuist your een on, Jims?"

"I could be daein fine wi' yon field atween the Lang Plantin an' the Gammelston road end," says I; "I dinna mind the name o't, but it's in lea the noo."

"That's Windlestraes he means," says somebody in the room.

"A' richt," says An'ra, "we'll gie Jims Windlestraes. Ye're weel aff, Jims; it's a forty acre field: ye'll no' want ony mair. An' we'll gie Adam Instant Happerkaw."

"Ye'll hae to gie me mair nor that," says Adam; "it's unco dowf land, Happerkaw. I couldna mak a livin oot o't. If ye throw in Barebreeks wi't it micht dae."

"Houts, Adam," says An'ra, "the deil's greedy, but you're mislear'd! Wull naethin less nor the twa content ye, man?"

"No," says he, "I maun hae the twa, an' I mean to hae them, that's mair!"

"Weel, weel," says An'ra, "we'll no' cast oot aboot Barebreeks: we'll throw in Barebreeks, sin' ye've set your heart on't. But we maun dail sma' an' sair a', ye ken. Here's Dave Da'gleish—we'll gie Dave Quarry-holes; an' Robbie Dodds—hae ye ony choice, Robbie?"

"I'll hae Priest's Dean," says Robbie Dodds.

"An' I'll hae Crummieside an' Burnywind," says Wullie Herkis.

"An' I'll hae Junky's Acre," says Dod Imrie the roadman.

"An' I'll hae Muckle Whippie an' Little Whippie," says Ecky Blair; "it's soor land and gey foggy, some bits o't, but no' that bad for grazin, either."

"I was thinkin I wad tak Tam's Croft an'

Whunny for my fa'-share," says Dan Preacher the miller's man.

"Ay, was ye?" says An'ra. "But ye maunna be in ower big a hurry, Dannie, my man! We'll hae to see whether or no' ye hae ony richt to a fa'-share at a'. Ye're but an incomer, ye ken. Ye haena been abüne four year in the pairish."

"But I was brocht up here," says Dan; "ye a' ken this pairish was my cawf-grund. I gaed to Snawdon schule whan I was a laddie."

"But ye werena born in the pairish, were ye?" says An'ra.

"No," says Dan, "I was born in Gammelston, but that disna maitter. Robbie Dodds wasna born in the pairish, either."

"But ye hae been oot o't a' your life till juist the tither day," says An'ra.

"But a' my forebears belanged to Snawdon," says he. "Gang up to the kirk-yaird, an' ye'll see a' their heid-stanes, atween the thorn-tree an' the sooth dyke. Ye'll see my grandfaither's stane: 'Daniel Preacher, Feuar in Snawdon'; an' his faither's stane, wi' twa crooks an' a death's-heid on't: 'Jeremiah Preacher, Shepherd at Scraemuir in this Pairish.' What mair wad ye hae, I wad like to ken?"

"Weel, we canna settle that the noo," says An'ra; "we no' want to be ower hard on ye, Dan, but the pareeshioners maun be sair'd first."

The mair the merrier, the fewer the better cheer, ye ken."

"If Dan Preacher's no' to get Tam's Croft an' Whunny," says Geordie Runciman, "I daur say I micht tak them. There's a guid stance for a bit hoose on the high grund, an' if the land was limed an' fenced an' drained it wad mak a denty bit mailin, an' keep a body fine. I think I'll juist settle to tak thae twa fields."

"Wull ye?" says An'ra; "an' whae's to pay for pitin up your bit hoose an' drainin an' limin your land, deacon? Hae ye settled that, tae?"

"Whae's to pay for't?" says Geordie; "it wull be paid for oot o' the teinds, of coorse, the same's your ain."

"Weel," says An'ra, "that's as guid a ane as I hae heard for a gey while! Oot o' the teinds, quo' he! Man, div ye think we hae gaen an' disestaablished oor kirk for the benefit o' you Frees? Div ye think we're sae simple as to let your folk pit their han's in oor pooch an' help theirsels to oor siller? Na, na; we'll keep oor ain fish guts for oor ain sea maws! We maun see to this. If it's no' in the Bill already, we'll hae to mak suir that it's put in, an' made as ticht as thack an' raip can mak it. We're no' gaun to let the Frees lick oot o' oor dish, no' likely! Are we, lads?"

A'boddy in the room said no' likely excep' Geordie himsel an' twa-three mair o' the Free

Kirk folk, wha were inclined to grumme a bit an' say it wasna fair. But naebody heeded them. Some ither ane got Tam's Croft an' Whunny, an' so the divesion gaed on. An' aye mair drinks were ca'd for—the lassie was keepit rinin that nicht, I can tell ye—an' wi' a'boday lauchin an' speakin at aince at the tap o' their vice, there was an unco din. Jenny Brockie had to come ben aince or twice, an' beseek us no' to mak sic a noise, or we wad hae the poliss in to us, an' she nicht loss her license.

At last somebody says to An'ra Wabster, "What are ye gaun to tak yoursel, An'ra? Ye hae dealt oot the maist feck o' the land roun' Snawdon noo, but ye haena forgotten yoursel, suirly? That wadna be like ye!"

"No," says An'ra; "I hae been mindin mysel, as weel as ither folk. I hae markit aff a bit o' land in my ain mind that I think wad fit me fine. There's no' that muckle o't, mebbe, but—"

But afore An'ra got time to tell us what'n bit o' land he had waled for himsel, he was brocht to a stop in a maist extraordinary mainner. Wi' a'boday wantin to hear what he was sayin, there was a kind o' quietness in the room; whan a' at aince cam a vice frae the faur corner: "I'LL TAKE THE GLABE!"

A'boday gied a kind o' start, an' lookit to whaur the vice cam frae, to see whae had spoken. It was Thad M'Manus, the cattleman up at

Bogha'; an Irishman, but a quait eneuch chap. He had been a guid wheen years wi' Durie, an' was weel kent aboot the place for a steady, hard-workin, sober man.

We were a' mair nor astonished, I maun say, to hear Thad pit in a claim for the glebe; but as for An'ra Wabster, his face got white wi' passion, an' he gruppit the watter-joug at his elbow as if he was gaun to fling it at the man's heid. I may as weel tell ye that by this time An'ra had taen mair nor was guid for him; he wasna what ye micht ca' fou, but three sheets in the wind.

"Was that you, Thad M'Manus?" says he, tryin to speak unco slow an' distinc'. "What did I hear ye say?"

"I said I'll take the glabe," says Thad; "I have a notion av it, an' being a pareeshioner, sure I have as much roight to it as anny av yez!"

"Ou, ye're wantin the glebe, are ye?" says An'ra; an' up he got to his feet, an' spak across the room, ower the heids o' the folk, straucht at the Irishman, wha stüde up tae—"ye're wantin the glebe, are ye? Noo, ye'll listen to me, Thad M'Manus, an' I'll tell ye what ye are, an' what ye may look for. Ye hae come ower here, an' ye hae gotten wark to dae that no' mony Scotsmen care aboot, for it's naisty, cloitery' wark, an' has to be düne on the Sundays. But div ye think we want to keep ye? No' a bit o't!

What for are we gaun to gie ye a Parliament o' your ain, if it's no' to gar ye bide at hame? You'll tak the glebe, wull ye? We'll see aboot that! Ye may get leave to feed oor nowt, but ye'll no' get leave to steal oor land! There's ower mony o' your kind here already, an' the süner ye get awa back to your ain peat-haggs the blyther we wull be. You'll tak the glebe, wull ye? Awa hame wi' ye to your ain kintra, an' shüte ane o' your neebours, an' tak his pitatypatch, gin ye want land o' your ain! Oot o' here wi' ye!—to the door this meenute! Ye lousy landlouper—ye puir worshipper o' graven eemages—ye stinkin brock o' an Irish byre-man!"

Ye never saw in your life sic a face as Thad M'Manus put on whan An'ra gied him this abüse. He got whiter nor An'ra himsel, an' his een bleezed, an' he bit his lip till ye'd ha' thocht the bluid wad spring. Never a word he spak, but he gied An'ra a look that wad ha' strucken him deid, gin looks could kill, an' made for the door, an' dadded it tae ahint him, an' was gaen.

There was a wheen o' us thocht An'ra had mebbe been raither a wee hard on the Irishman; but he said no, that was the way to speak to sic swine; an' was it no' sense what he had said? were we gaun to sit still an' let a Papist help himsel to the lands o' oor Protestant Kirk? Of coorse we a' agreed that sic a thing wasna to be

thocht o'; an' syne An'ra tell't us that he ettled to tak the glebe to himsel, an' that was what he was gaun to say to us whan Thad interrupted him. There was some o' them wad fain ha' gotten the chance o' the glebe, for it was a bit o' guid land, an' in guid heart; but naebody cared to cross An'ra Wabster, so they said naethin, an' he got leave to tak it.

Süne after this it chappit ten—it's at the tail-end o' sic merry meetins that a body wad fain hae auld Forbes-Mackenzie back again—an' Jenny couldna get the hoose clear o' us quick eneuch. An'ra gaed awa wi' some o' his Snawdon cronies to keep it up for anither hoor or twa. It was nae üse speakin til him, an' advisin him to come hame wi' us, for the drink was in his heid, an' it made him unco dour. So we büde to leave him, an' Wullie an' Dave an' mysel an' twa-three mair took the road thegither for Cauldshiel.

Jess didna speer at me whaur I had been; nae dou't she kent withoot askin. An' she no' said onythin to me aboot the votin, either. I could see that she was gey down i' the mooth, an' at ony ither time I wad maist likely ha' blamed mysel, an' felt as if I had been daein somethin wrang. But there's naethin like a drap o' the Auld Kirk, an' a meetin o' frien's, for makin a body feel crouse an' content wi' himsel. What it micht be the morn was anither thing, but for

that nicht I could think o' naethin but my guid luck in gettin Windlestraes, an' what wad be the best way o' crappin it.

About twa o'clock in the mornin we were roused oot o' oor bed by An'ra Wabster's wife, wha cam reelin on the door in a dreidfu' state o' mind, an' tell't us her man had never made his appearance, an' she was feared some mishanter maun ha' come ower him. We a' kent that, nae maitter hoo bad An'ra micht be, he could aye keep his legs, an' find his road hame; an' there was nae dou't it lookit queer, it bein sae faur on, an' nae word o' him. Weel, I pu'd on my claes, an' got Wullie Herkis an' Dave an' Ecky Blair oot o' their beds; an' we took stable lanterns wi' us, for it was a dark nicht, an' gaed awa doun the Snawdon road lookin oot for him.

Puir An'ra! We fand him lyin in the ditch, at the back side o' the Lang Plantin, wi' his heid an' his face a' bluid, a maist waesome objec'. We got an awfu' gliff whan we saw him first, for we thocht he maun be deid, he was lyin that still. But syne we saw that the life was in him, an' that he had been knockit stüpid wi' a blow on the heid. So we took a yett aff its hinges, an' Dave Da'gleish gaed doun to Snawdon as fast as he could rin for the doctor, an' the tither three o' us cairrit him hame. He was nae licht wecht, I can tell ye.

What a skirl his wife gied whan we cam to

the door, an' she saw her man brocht hame to her in siccan a state! She wasna o' muckle üse, puir thing; but Jess cam yont an' sorted him up, for she had baith a heid an' a pair o' han's, an' kent what to dae as weel as ony doctor. Syne the doctor cam an' dressed the wound; he said it maun ha' been inflickit wi' some blunt instrument, an' lookit gey ugly, but he thocht wi' care An'ra wad win through. He said it was a bash on the heid o' nae common kind, an' he didna think there was anither harn-pan in the pairish wad ha' stüde it; ony ordinary ane wad ha' crackit like an egg-shell. He said it was a guid thing for An'ra that he had a thick skull an' a teuch constitütion, but he maun be keepit unco quait, an' he wadna be able for his wark for a gey while.

An' nae mair he was. It took him a fortnicht afore he was able to win atour the bed, an' anither week afore he crossed the door. An' what a like sicht he was whan he got oot! They had shaved his heid, for he had kind o' fevered; an' it was plaistered a' ower an' rowed in bandages; an' his face was a' fa'n in, an' he had nae mair colour nor a dish-clout. He said himsel that sax men had rushed oot upon him frae the Lang Plantin, an' said, "Your money or your life!" an' a' attackit him at aince; an' syne, he said, the haill warld gaed fleein roun' him, an' he no' minded ony mair till he cam to himsel in

his ain bed at Cauldshiel. Some folk said that he had juist been the waur o' drink, an' fa'n in the ditch, an' hit his heid against a stane. Onyway, it was a dear ploy for An'ra, an' he had guid reason to mind the nicht o' the pollin at Snawdon.

XX

THE PROMISED LAND

I NEEDNA tell ye hoo the Leeberals got in, an' after a while the Bill cam on an' wan through. As I said at the beginnin o' my story, Disestaiblishment left the Auld Kirk gey near whaur it was, as fur as ane could see. There was a terrible commotion a' ower the kintra, nae dou't; but whan ye gaed into Snawdon kirk on a Sunday, ye wad never ha' kent ony difference. But what we couldna mak oot at first, an' what fashed us sair whan we did mak it oot, was, that Disestaiblishment made unco little difference to oorsels.

It turned oot that nae pairish got a bawbee o' the siller or aince the pairish minister either dee'd or gied up his chairge. They said that this proveesion was in Tod-Lowrie's Bill frae the verra first, but if it was, we either hadna noticed it or hadna understüde it richt; an' I canna explain it yet, what way the meenisters should ha' gaen on fechtin against Disestaiblishment, whan a' the time nane o' them were gaun to loss a ha'penny by it. I'll no' say it wasna in the

Bill; an' it's juist possible oor een may ha' been ower fast set on the bit aboot gettin the siller to see what cam in atween. Onyway, nane o' us had taen it in, an' it was a sair disappointment.

It was in the fore-end o' hairst that the Bill wan through, an' by the time the stuff was in the yaird we had come to understan' that we couldna touch the siller or aince the meenister was oot o' the way. An' wad ye believe it?—An'ra Wabster an' Tam Arnott an' Adam Instant an' the lave o' them a' turned an' yokit on me, an' gied me a' the blame for Broun gettin the pairish! They said it was me that had threepit we maun hae a young, veegorous man for the place; an' if it hadna been for me they micht ha' putten in Simpson o' Lempockshaws, wha was moderawtor durin the vacancy, an' had gien the folk to understan' that if he got a ca' he wadna refuse it; an' Simpson was wearin on to be an auld man. An' they said it was me that wadna let them elec' Gillespie, the tither candidate on the short leet, wha, as onybody could see, lookit unco wakely, an' was noo, as we heard, awa' some foreign airt on account o' his health, an' no' like to last lang. But no, they said, I büde to hae Broun: a man wha didna ken what it was to hae a sair heid, an' wha, by a' appearance, wad offeeciate at a' oor buryins. I thoct it onythin but fair üsage, the way they gaed on; for it's easy to be wise ahint

the han', an' they had a' been for Broun juist as muckle as mysel.

On the back o' this, the meenister preached the hairst sermon that I hae tell't ye o'. It was frae the text, "Whatsoever a man saweth, that shall he also reap"; an' he begoud by readin a chapter oot o' ane o' the wee prophets, aboot some unco puir hairst the Jews had had lang syne. Whether it was that they had been brunt up wi' drouth or drooned wi' weet, I dinna mind, but they were a' grummlin aboot the wather; an' the prophet, he ups an' says to them, "What are ye grummlin at? Nae dou't it has been an ill hairst, an' meeserable wark oot in the fields, an' a' the wages ye hae earned ye nicht as weel ha' putten in a bag wi' holes. Ye lookit for muckle, an' lo, it cam to little. An' what way? Because ye hae been thinkin mair o' your bodies nor o' your souls, an' mair aboot your ain hooses nor aboot the hoose o' the Lord."

An' syne he tell't us that gin the prophet was in Scotland the day he nicht stan' up an' cry the same thing ower again, an' it wad be true. He tell't us we had been sawin to the flesh, an' o' the flesh we wad reap naethin but disappointment. He gied us some unco plain speakin. He as guid as tell't us that he cam o' a lang-lived race, an' didna ken what it was to hae an ache or a pain; an' he ettled to tak unco guid care o' himsel, an', if it was the wull o' Providence, to

conteenue meenister o' Snawdon for mony a lang year to come. He said we wad find that hankerin an' hingin on is a puir trade, an' that the man gaes lang barefit that wears deid men's shoon. He said the ill we had dūne could never be undūne, but he hopit we wad come to see oor mistake, an' hae the grace to be sorry for't.

Tam Arnott, I mind, was no' pleased ava wi' this sermon, an' said what business had the meenister to be evenin us wi' the like o' the Jews? An' An'ra Wabster was in sic a rage at it that he gaed to the session clerk an' lifted his lines: no' that he took them ony ither where. But as for Wullie Herkis, an' Dave Da'gleish, an' Adam Instant, an' Dan Preacher, an' a gey twa-three mair, the sermon took an unco effec' upon them; they said they were feared we had gaen faur wrang, an' if the thing was to dāe ower again they wad dae different.

I mind ae Fast Day I had gaen doun to the kirk, for I aye attendit maist reg'lar, though I had gien ower gaun to the meetins o' session. An' after the sermon Tam Arnott an' mysel an' ane or twa mair were takin a daunder roun' the place, an' we gaed doun the Tinkler's Loan, that rins by the side o' the meenister's glebe. An' there we fand An'ra Wabster stan'in lookin ower the palin at the glebe, for he aye coonted it his ain.

"He's no' keepin it as he should," says An'ra;

"whaever comes after him wull hae his wark to bring things richt. It's a shame to see guid land ill guidit."

"Houts, An'ra," says Tam Arnott, "there's no' that muckle wrang wi't the noo. What could ye wush better nor to hae thae twa upper fields under gress? Ye ken the sayin, Fairmers' faugh gars lairds lauch. Ye're the laird, ye ken, an' the incomin tenant forby, an' ye haena muckle reason to complain!"

"But juist look at that under field!" says An'ra; "see what he's growin on't — strawberries! The filthiest crap ye can grow! See at the thistles, an' the dockens, and the skellochs an' rack! A man has nae richt to be raisin sic dirty craps on ither folk's grund. It'll tak guid kens hoo lang to get the land clean again."

At this pint whae should we see comin up the Loan but the meenister himsel. He gied us guid-day, an' we a' touched oor bannets to him: a' but An'ra Wabster. An'ra made believe no' to see him. He took his pipe, an' begoud to rummil it oot, an' syne filled it an' put back the dottle; an' a' the time never lat on he kent the meenister was there.

"Fine day, lads," says the meenister.

"Fine day, sir," we a' said back.

"Fine day, An'ra," says he, lookin ower at An'ra Wabster; an' syne he gied a queer kind o' nicher o' a lauch, an'—"Viewin the promised

land, An'ra?" says he, an' awa he gaed. We couldna but lauch, but An'ra lost his temper, an' said if it was a joke it was a mighty puir ane.

Weel, a guid wheen years hae passed sin' syne, an' they hae brocht unco chainges. I'm past wark noo, an' Jess an' me hae a bit hoose doun in Snawdon; oor sons an' dochters are a' mind-fu' o' us; an' wi' oor ain bit savins we want for naethin. Jess never says kirk to me. She never says "I tell't ye," or casts up to me that I nicht ha' düne itherways. Whiles I think to mysel that mebbe the weemen's way o' jumpin at a thing is suirer after a' nor oor way o' gropin at it. An aye the langer I live the mair I see that a guid wife is the croun o' a' blessins. As the Buik tells us, her price is abüne rubies.

There's juist ae thing she wad fain hae me dae—I ken it fine, for a' she never says—an' that is, to mak it up wi' the meenister an' gae back to the session. It's no' the meenister's faut, I maun alloo, that I haena düne it or syne. An' auld Wedderlairs is awa, an' Archie Howden tae. I whiles think I nicht dae waur, an' say to mysel that I'll hae to see aboot it. After a', it's no' fair to blame the meenister for no' wantin to dee.

As I said, there hae been sair chainges in the pairish sin' syne. Tam Arnott's awa in the heid, puir fallow, an' spen's his days in his chair at the chimley-lugs knittin stockins. An' Robbie

Dodds got tired o' waitin, an' gaed awa ower the sea to Mannytoby, to bide wi' his guidson an' his dochter. An' Dave Da'gleish is on the railway, an' Wullie Herkis is drivin a lorry in the toun. An' An'ra Wabster's deid. Puir An'ra! A' the grund o' his ain that he ever got in the pairish was juist a lair in the kirk-yaird.

An' there's me: as fu' o' the pains as I can haud. It's a' I can dae to hirple doun the street wi' a muckle staff under my oxter; an' I'm juist a leevin wather-gless—there's no' a chainge o' the wind but I find it in my banes. I'm gey dull o' hearin, an' my sicht's failin me, an' my teeth's maist a' oot: I'll süne hae to stay my stamack wi' sappy meat, like a spained wean.

An' there's the meenister: leevin an' life-like; no' a grey hair on his heid, nor a crawtae at his een; awa to the curlin in winter an' the gowfin in simmer, as hale an' feir as ye like.

An' there's Tod-Lowrie: he's a Jidge noo, an' a Lord forby. He üsed to tell us that the Hoose o' Lords was juist a toom for a' the rubbish o' the kintra; but he maun ha' chainged his opeenion, I'm thinkin, for noo he sits in the gilded chawmer himsel, wi' a red clock on his back an' a gowd croun on his heid, for what I ken.

Weel, weel: it's a reel-rall warld!

GLOSSARY

- AIBLINS, perhaps.
AIRT, direction.
AITS, oats.
AIXIES, ague.
ARGLE-BARGIN, discussion.
AUGHT, eight.
AUNTERN ANE, a stray one.
BAGGIES, Swedish turnips.
BASS, a door mat.
BATTERED UP, pasted up.
BAUGH, vapid.
BAWKS, beams.
BEGOUD, began.
BEGRUTTEN, tear-stained.
BEHAUDEN, obliged.
BELYVE, by-and-by.
BIELDY, sheltered.
BIEN, well-to-do.
BIG, to build.
BINK, a rack for crockery.
BINK, to bow down.
BIT AN' BRAT, food and clothing.
BIZZ, TAK THE, to stampede.
BLAE, livid.
BLASTIT, broken-winded.
BLATE, bashful.
BLOBBIT, blotted.
BONNY-DIES, pretty things.
BOYNE, a small tub.
BRAID-BAND, IN, of sheaves when laid out to dry, on their bands, but loose.
BRAT, an apron.
BRAWs, fine clothes.
BREE, juice, gravy.
BROCK, a badger.
BROD, collection plate.
BROK, kitchen refuse.
BROWST, a brewing.
BRUCKLE, brittle.
BUCHT SEAT, large square pew.
BÜDE, behooved.
BUIRDLY, big, stalwart.
BÜNEMOST, uppermost.
BURN-AIRN, branding-iron.
BUSKIT, decked, attired.
CA', to drive.
CAB, to pilfer.
CALLER, fresh.
CAMOVINE, camomile.
CAMSTANE, whiting.
CAMSTEERIE, headstrong, quarrelsome.
CANGLE, to harp on a thing.
CANTLE, crown of the head.
CAVIE, a hen-coop.
CHAP, to strike.
CHIPPY-BURDIE, a child's toy.

- CHUCKYSTANES, pebbles.
 CHUFFIE, round, full.
 CLAGGY, sticky.
 CLAIVERS, idle talk.
 CLARTY, dirty.
 CLASH, gossip.
 CLATTIN, raking, scraping.
 CLAUTS AN' HARLES, IN, in
 heaps.
 CLECKIN, a brood.
 CLOIT, to fall heavily.
 CLOITER, filthy.
 CLOOTS, hooves.
 CLOUTED, patched.
 COFT, bought.
 COGIES, bickers.
 COMPORTURE, colporteur.
 COOF, a silly creature.
 COOM, coal dust.
 COUP, to overturn.
 COUTHIE, comfortable.
 COWE, a besom.
 COWED, docked.
 CRAIG-CLOTH, neck-cloth.
 CRAIVE, pig-stye.
 CREISH THE LOOF, to grease
 the palm, to bribe.
 CRINCHIN, grinding.
 CROUPIN, croaking hoarsely.
 CROUSE, brisk, self-confident.
 CRUM, a scrap.
 CRUMMIESTAFF, shepherd's
 crook.
 CRYIN SILLER, fee for procla-
 mation of banns.
 CUITTLE AFF, to flatter.
 CUSTOCK, the rind of a cab-
 bage-stalk.
 DAFFIN, rustic banter.
 DAIDLIN, without energy.
 DAIKER ON THEGITHER, to
 jog along together.
 DAIRG, a day's work.
 DAIVERT, knocked stupid.
 DAUNDER, a stroll.
 DAWTIT, indulged.
 DICHT, to wipe, to clean.
 DIRL, to vibrate.
 DISSLE, a gentle shower.
 DOITED, stupid with age.
 DONNERT, muddle-headed.
 DORTY, pettish.
 DOTTLE, the end of one pipe
 and beginning of the next.
 DOVER, to drop over to sleep.
 DOWF, sluggish.
 DOWIE, depressed.
 DRAFF, offscourings.
 DRAIBLE, to splash.
 DRAM-HEARTED, downcast.
 DRANGLIN, loitering.
 DRAUNTIN, whining.
 DUNG DOUN, overthrown.
 DWAM, feeling of faintness.
 EBB, shallow.
 EIDENT, diligent.
 ELDRIN, up in years.
 ENS, else.
 ETTLE, (1) to intend, (2) to
 attempt.
 EVEN, to compare.
 FAIR-CA'IN, plausible.
 FA'N IN, shrunken.
 FAUGH, fallow ground.
 FEERY O' THE FEET, active.
 FERLIES, wonders.
 FIKES, scruples.
 FIKY, finical.

- FLAKES, sheep-hurdles.
 FLEECH, to coax.
 FLETHERS, flattery.
 FLEYED, frightened.
 FLYPE, to turn inside out.
 FLYTE, to scold.
 FOGGY, mossy.
 FORJESKIT, tired out.
 FOZY, soft, spongy.
 FREETS, superstitious notions.
 FREM, strange, foreign.
 FUFF UP, flare up.
 FÜLL, highly delighted.
 FÜSHIONLESS, insipid.
 GAE-DOWN, appetite.
 GAIT, direction.
 GALLIVANTIN, gadding about.
 GANSH, to snap at.
 GANTIN, yawning.
 GASH, bold of speech, ready.
 GAWFIN, laughing rudely.
 GAWSY, plump.
 GEISTS, joists.
 GILRAVAGIN, rioting.
 GIRN, to make a grimace.
 GIRR, a hoop.
 GLABBER, to chatter.
 GLAIKIT, giddy, flighty.
 GLAURY, muddy.
 GLED, a hawk.
 GLEG, smart, keen.
 GLEID, a glowing ember.
 GLEY'D, awry.
 GLIFF, a start, shock.
 GLISK, a glimpse.
 GLUNSHIN, sulking.
 GNAFF, a poor creature.
 Goo, taste.
 GRAININ, groaning.
 GRAIP, a pitchfork.
 GRAITH, gear, fittings.
 GROOSE, to shiver.
 GUID-ANES, Sunday best.
 GUFFIES, simpletons.
 GUIDSON, son-in-law.
 GURR, to growl.
 HABBLE, a fix.
 HADDEN AN' DUNG, down-trodden.
 HAIN, to spare.
 HAIRST, harvest.
 HARN-PAN, skull.
 HASP, hank of yarn.
 HAUCHLE, to waddle.
 HAVERS, foolish talk.
 HAWK, to clear the throat.
 HECHT, a promise.
 HIDDLIN, underhand.
 HINNY-PIG, honey-pot.
 HIRPLE, to limp.
 HIRSEL, flock.
 HOAST, a cough.
 HOG, a young sheep.
 HOTCH, to move uneasily.
 HOWK, to dig.
 HUNKER, to squat on the hams.
 HUSSIE, housewife.
 JADSTANES, pebbles.
 JALOUSE, to suspect.
 JAUN'ER, to drivel.
 JAUP, to bespatter.
 JEEGLER, a "cheeper."
 JINK, to dodge.
 JOUKRY-PAWKRY, trickery.
 JUNDIE, a shove with the elbow.
 KÆ-WITTED, scatter-brained.

- KAIL THRO' THE REEK, TO**
 GET ONE'S, to get a scolding.
KEEL'D, marked with reddle.
KENSPECKLE, conspicuous.
KEP, to catch.
KILLOGUE, to talk confidentially.
KIMMERS, gossips.
KIP, PLAY THE, to play truant.
KITTLE, ticklish.
KNAPPIT, clipped.
KNOCK, clock.
KYTHE, to show one's self.
LAFT, gallery.
LAMMERMUIR LION, a sheep.
LAVEROCK, a lark.
LEESE OOT, unduly prolong.
LEESH O' LEES, string of lies.
LICHTLY, to slight, despise.
LIFT, the sky.
LINES, certificate of church membership.
LIPPEN TO, to trust.
LIPPIE, the quarter of a peck.
LIRKS, creases.
LOUNDERIN, a drubbing.
LOUT, to stoop.
LOWN, sheltered.
LOWSE, to unyoke, stop work.
MAGGS, carter's tip.
MAIK, match.
MANT, a stammer.
MASKIN-PAT, teapot.
MAWK, a maggot.
MAILIN, a farm.
MELL, to meddle.
MESSAN, a small dog.
MIRK, dark.
MIRNIN, moaning.
MISHANTER, mischance.
MISLEAR'D, unmannerly.
MOLLIGRANT, a whine.
MOUDIE, a mole.
NACKY, clever.
NAG, to tease.
NAP, TO TAK ONE'S, to chaff, hoax.
NEEP, a turnip.
NICHER, neigh.
NIEVE, fist.
NIFFER, to swap.
NOWT, cattle.
ORRA, odd.
OXTER, armpit.
PAIKS, a thrashing.
PANG FU', crammed.
PAPPIN, moving in and out.
PECHIN, panting, puffing.
PERNICKETTY, fastidious.
PINKIE, the little finger.
PIOY, a cone of damp gunpowder.
PLENISHIN, farm stocking.
PLOUTER, to toy, trifle.
PRIG, to beg.
RAX, to reach.
REDD UP, to tidy.
REEL, to knock loudly.
REEL-RALL, topsy-turvy.
REISHLIN, rustling.
RIG-BANE, backbone.
ROOPY, hoarse.
ROTTEN, a rat.
ROUPIT, sold up.
ROWTH, abundance.
RUCKLE, a rickety structure.
RUG, to tear.

- RUMBLE, to rummage.
 RUNG, a stout staff.
 RUNKLED, wrinkled.
 RUNT, a cabbage-stalk.
 SCART, to scratch.
 SCODGY, drudge.
 SCOMFIST, choked.
 SCOUG IT, to take shelter.
 SCUNNER, to sicken, disgust.
 SHAUCHLED, misshapen.
 SHED, divided.
 SHOG, a push.
 SIMMER AN' WINTER, to shilly-shally.
 SKAIL THE BYKE, to dismiss the meeting.
 SKELLOCHS, wild mustard.
 SKELF, a blast of rain.
 SLOCKEN, to slake.
 SMEDDUM, grit.
 SMITTLE, catching.
 SMUDGIN, laughing in one's sleeve.
 SNASH, abusive language.
 SNECK, latch.
 SNELL, sharp, keen.
 SNIRTIN, sniggering.
 SNOD, neat.
 SOOK DOOK, buttermilk.
 SORNIN, sponging.
 SOUGH, a whisper, rumor.
 SOUP, to sweep.
 SPAEMAN, a soothsayer.
 SPAINED, weaned.
 SPALE, a splinter.
 SPEER, to inquire.
 SPLAIRGE, to smear.
 SPUNK, spirit.
 SPURTLE, stick for stirring porridge.
 STAIVIN, proceeding aimlessly.
 STAWED, surfeited, disgusted.
 STEEK, a stitch.
 STEEKIT, shut.
 STIDDY, an anvil.
 STOOP, a support.
 STOUR, dust.
 STRAVAGIN, wandering.
 STRUNT, the sulks.
 SWATCH, sample.
 SWEE, to swing.
 SWEER, loath.
 SWIRLIE, intricate.
 SWITHER, to hesitate.
 SYNDINS, rinsings.
 TAIGLE, to loiter behind.
 TAPE, to dole out.
 TENT, TAK to, take care.
 THACK AN' RAIP, thatch and rope.
 THEEKIT, thatched.
 THIEVELESS, useless.
 THIG, to beg.
 THIRLED, bound.
 THOLE, to endure.
 THOWLESS, pithless.
 THRANG, busy, crowded.
 THRAWN, cross-grained.
 THREEP, to repeat, insist.
 TILL, cold clay.
 TINT, lost.
 TIP, a ram.
 TIRLY-WIRLIES, mazy windings.
 TIRR'D, stripped bare.

TOCHER, marriage portion.	WEISE, to turn.
TOD, a fox.	WERSH, flavorless.
TOOM, empty.	WHAIZLIN, wheezing.
TOOM, place for shooting ref- use.	WHANG, a large slice.
TOOTIT, trumpeted.	WHEE-GEES, whims.
TOWT, slight ailment.	WHEENGIN, whimpering.
TRANSE, passage in church.	WHILLY-WHA'IN, cajolery.
TRAUCHLIN, dragging.	WHINGER, a knife.
TROKINS, dealings, intrigues.	WHUMMLE - DOUN, to over- turn.
TROW, to believe.	WIRRY-COWS, bugbears.
UNCTION, auction.	WUD, mad.
WALE, to choose.	WYLE, to entice.
WALY, big, heavy.	YAFF, to yelp.
WARSLE, to struggle.	YETT, a gate.
WEAR, to herd.	YILL, ale.
WEEL - FARRANT, good - look- ing.	YOKE ON, to attack.
	YOKE TO, to buckle to.

THE END

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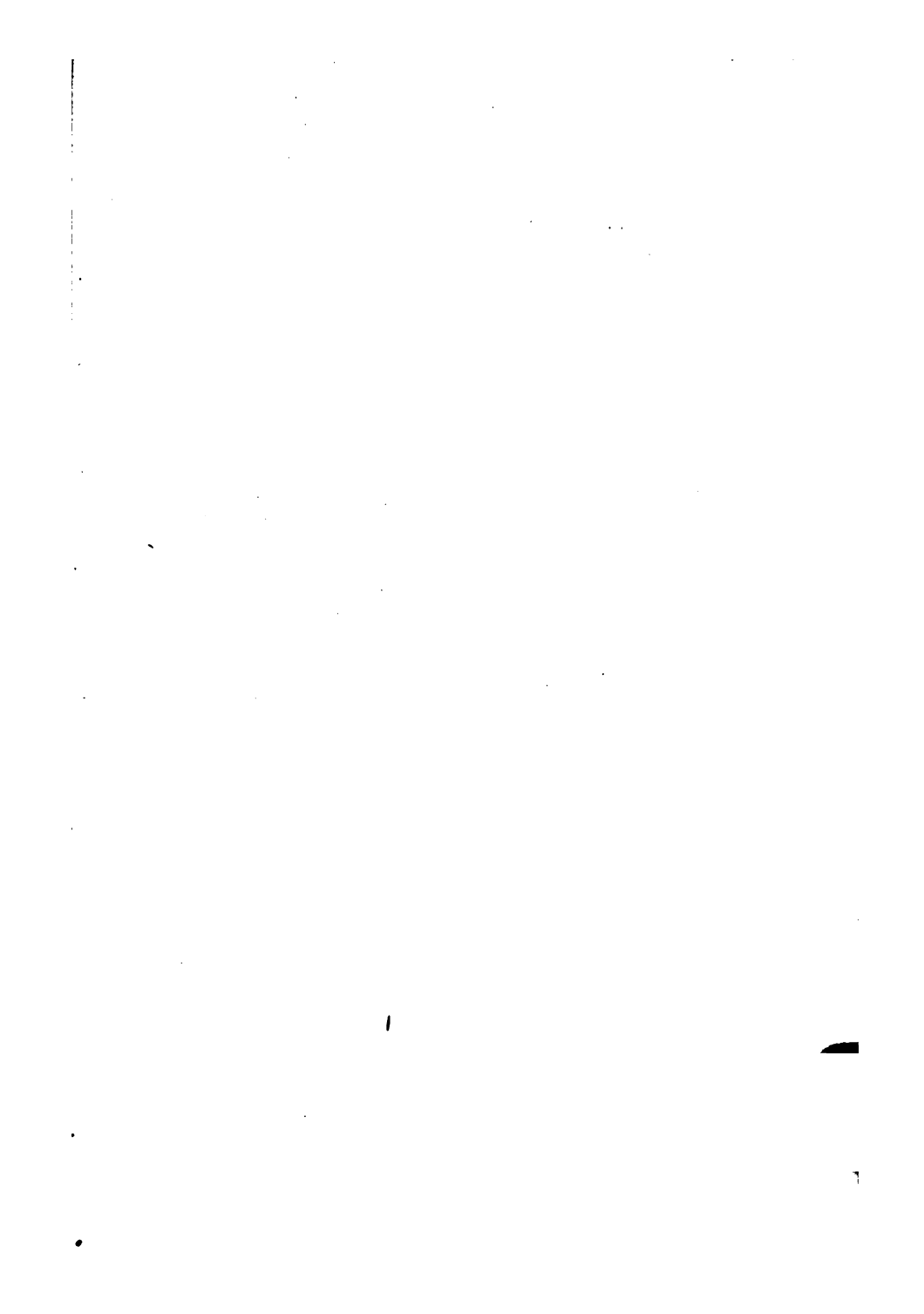
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